Week ending February 21 1953
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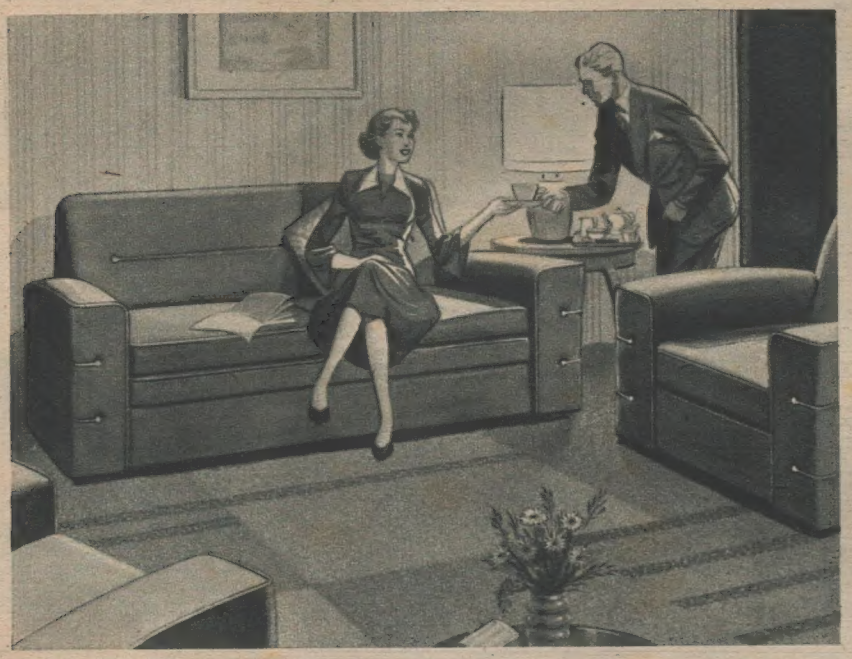

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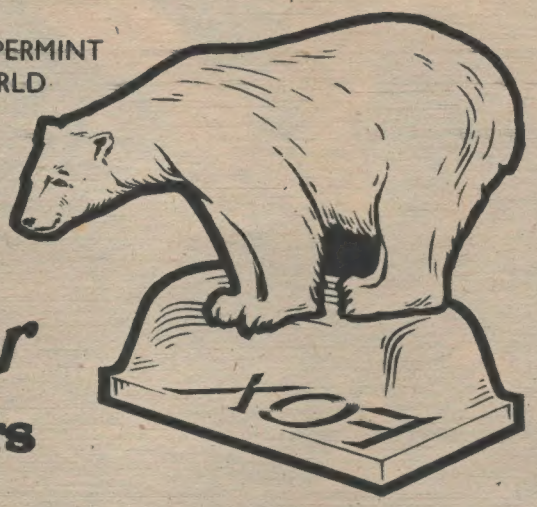

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CORRUGATED ROOFS

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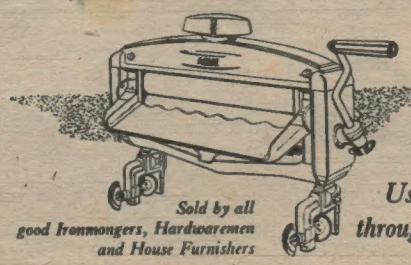

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EDITORIAL

Really necessary?

THE posters used to ask: "Is Your Journey Really Necessary?" Now the tables are turned, and British Railways are imploring travellers to "Go By Rail."

But the public is reluctant. In 1951 each person made an average of only twenty-one rail journeys, against twenty-seven in 1938.

The total for 1952 is expected to be lower, and this year's figures, against the increased competition of air-lines and cheaper cars, may hit a new low record.

ONE reason is, of course, the policy of British Railways in imposing higher fares as revenue falls. This makes even fewer people travel, and so the fares go up again.

Fares are not the whole explanation. Passengers are put off by the grime that covers trains and stations; by inefficiency and incivility; by poor meals and lack of information; and by overcrowding of popular trains.

MR. ELLIOT
Must we "make do"?

Dirtiness is the most obvious fault. Although a woman wrote a letter of complaint a year ago that the waiting room at Manchester Exchange Station was "completely dirty," it remains dirty.

The Railway Executive admits the grime.

Its chairman, Mr. John Elliot, announcing an investigation, says: "Sloth and untidiness are indefensible: I do not attempt to defend them. But there are more than six thousand passenger stations, and large numbers of them unavoidably fell into bad condition during the war. Until restrictions on raw materials and capital investment are lifted, we must 'make do'."

UNFORTUNATELY the public—in spite of owning the railways—may not wish to "make do."

British Railways Magazine tells of "some of the things we might have done better. At one important station a rough temporary barrier was erected to control Saturday queues. It was left in position for the other weekdays, and cut the approach in two.

"At another busy station at lunchtime there were long queues at the inquiry office, and only one girl was on counter duty. We have got to be there when the public wants us."

WHATEVER is done about fares, the railways must start to run consistently on time, wash the dirt of fifty years off the stations and carriages, keep the lavatories clean, serve good if modest meals, put up more signs, and treat human beings better than animals.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

DOUGLAS L. MAYS'S cover may poke fun, but he knows from experience that women's hockey is a fast, rousing game of skill. He has played against women himself and has seen his daughters play at school. Fifty years ago, when such rules as "no player shall wear a hatpin" existed, women's teams were scorned. One reporter told of "hysterical women belabouring each other with sticks." But today, our women break records in international hockey.

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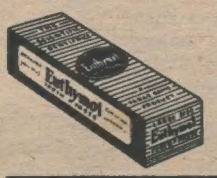

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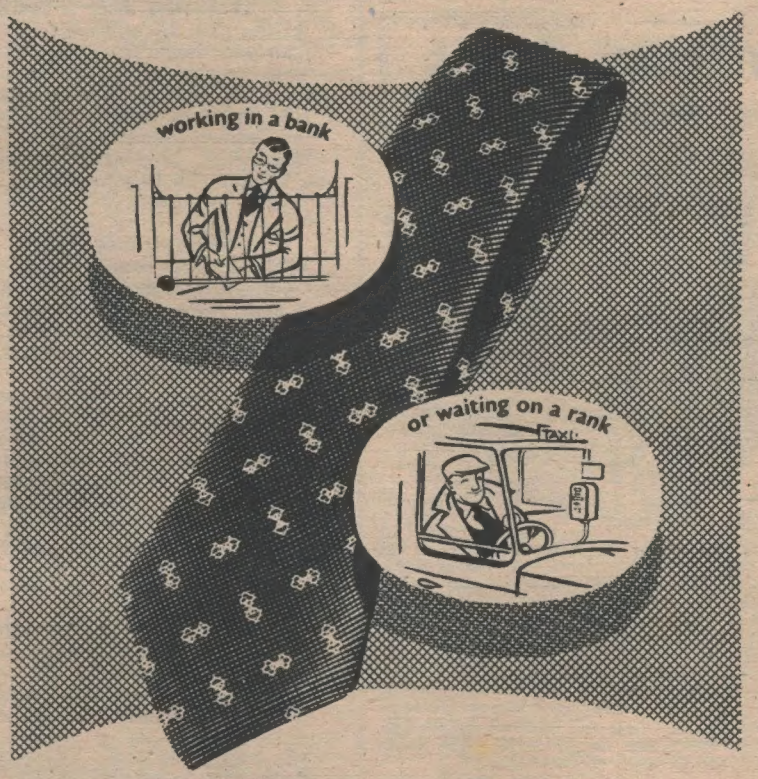

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FREE SPEECH

The high cost of borrowing my own money

AS the owner of a small business, I find it necessary to run two bank accounts—one for business transactions, and the other for the personal use of my wife and myself. These accounts are with the same branch of my bank. In the past few months my bank statement shows that I have been charged interest at five per cent for a short period when my business account was overdrawn by £200. At the same time my personal current account had a credit balance of about £100. I received no interest for this sum, but I had to pay the bank six guineas for the half year—their charge for looking after the account. On a deposit account of £300 I received interest at the rate of only two per cent.

Of course, I arranged the overdraft with the bank manager at the time, for which I had sound business reasons. But I cannot help feeling that there is something wrong somewhere—that, in the most gentlemanly way possible, I have been taken for a ride.—D. R., Surrey.

Among His Flock

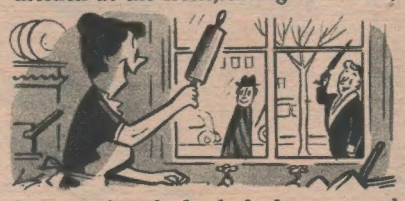
AT our local discussion group a clergyman was asked how passengers in a train compartment reacted to him when he wore his clerical collar. He told us: "In most cases they avoid my compartment. When someone does get in, he is either speechless, or a fanatic who tries to convert me."—J. W., Blackpool.

Eccentric Dial

WANTING to know the time of a train, I telephoned Railway Inquiries. A male voice answered "Hallo." The usual reply is a girl's voice saying "British Railways," so I asked if I was on to the right place. "Well—er—yes," was the hesitant reply. I was now convinced it was a wrong number, so I asked for confirmation. The voice replied: "I can tell you the times of any train because I work in Railway Inquiries. But I am now in a telephone kiosk in the city centre, and was just about to make a call when you telephoned me." — J. E. Hemming, Hanham, Bristol.

Welcome Courage

I HAVE just visited a new house built by a local authority. The architect deserves a medal. By placing the kitchen at the front, facing the street,



instead of at the back, he has removed the sense of isolation which so many women feel in their homes during the day.—Mrs. M. Sutton, Netherwoods Road, Headington, Oxford.

Laughing Later

LIKE Jimmy Edwards, I slept in a bell tent at Hooton Park R.A.F. station, near Liverpool ("Take It From Me," John Bull, January 17). Once, when bombers attacked and everyone charged from their beds, I was in front and a button on my tunic caught on a tent ring. While I stuck, unable to go forward or backward, my mates ran round and round inside looking for a way out. I'm glad Edwards wasn't one of them. He might have proved a little careless with that bayonet he was using on the rats.—Ex-Airman, Scotland.

This week's instalment of "Take It From Me" starts on page 12.

English At Home

UNLIKE the reader who wrote of the reluctance of the public to answer a knock on their doors ("Free Speech," January 24), I have experienced the reverse. What staggered me during an election canvass was the willingness of people to answer the door in various strange attire. Why such *odd* skirts, jumpers and jackets for indoor wear? Home fashions include curlers, head scarves, old shoes, clashing colours, no make-up, and slacks and blouses that don't meet. One woman was determined to have her say, despite a hardening face-pack. A man, "again any government," stated his views at length on the doorstep one chilly evening, clad only in a bath towel.—Elsie Davis, Oxhey, Herts.

Old Army Brew

IN the second of Eric Bennett's articles on the work of the Quartermaster-General's department (John Bull, January 31), there is a reference to the shipping of teapots. I was in the army for six and a half years, and served in nine countries. I had tea, of sorts, every day, but it never once came out of a teapot. — H. Haigh, Gawber Road, Barnsley, Yorkshire.

Comment from the War Office: "In peacetime, teapots are issued to married quarters and officers' and sergeants' messes."

Sensible Gifts

RETIREMENT gifts from colleagues ("Free Speech," January 24) are not always confined to umbrellas and clocks. My father-in-law was presented with a cheque and an electric blanket.—Marjorie McGarry, Chestnut Grove, Balham, London, S.W.12.

. . . I try to discover what the recipient would like. If I cannot ask his wife. Fireside chairs, an electric coffee percolator, and cut glass wine goblets have been some of the gifts. — Mrs. W. Standfast, Earlston Road, Wallasey, Cheshire.

. . . An employee of our Gas Board was presented with two live pigs.—Miss M. Kay, Southport, Lancs.

Machiavellian

YOUR new serial, *Fortune Is A Woman*, by Winston Graham, has a title that almost compels one to read the story; *The Singer, Not The Song* was another. I am sure the title must be taken from a classical source or a profound experience in the author's life.—Sam Hughes, Londonderry.

Winston Graham's title is taken from a phrase in "The Prince" by Niccolo Machiavelli (1469 - 1527), Italian statesman and writer. "The complete phrase does not bear much relation to my story," says Graham.

The Cosy Room

FINDING my boarding house expensive, I rented a furnished room and looked after myself. Here is a comparison of what I spent. Board residence: bed, breakfast and evening meal, £3 3s.; laundry, 5s.; lunches out, 17s. 6d. Total—£4 5s. 6d. Furnished room: rent (including light, heat and gas), £1 6s.; laundry, 5s.; rations, etc., 9s. 5½d.; lunches out, 17s. 6d. Total—£2 18s. I am saving money, and I have a home of my own.—R. S., Falmouth, Cornwall.

Ran On The Smell

AFTER taking in the cover of John Bull I always turn to the informative "digest" containing the artist's remarks. Those of Andrew Johnson, who painted the Austin Seven (John Bull, January 31), reminded me of a friend who, during the war, owned an old flat-twin Jowett. This was a very economical car and he would explain to friends: "I dip a rag in petrol and then tie it under the bonnet; she runs for miles like that!" — E. Smith, St. Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex.

Wordless Warning

COLOURED labels denoting the contents of packages are advocated by a reader ("Free Speech," January 21). In a factory I saw large packing cases stencilled with the outline of a wine glass. I was told that this sign is practically universal, and that even the most illiterate understand it as showing not only that the contents of the case are fragile, but which side up the case should be.—N. R., Newcastle upon Tyne.

Women Keep Warm

HOW do women, while wearing very little clothing compared with men, manage to keep warm, even in the coldest weather? Are they like the Red Indian who, when asked by a white man how he kept warm, replied: "You not cover face? Well, me face all over"?—B. S., Sussex.

A doctor says: "Even the thinnest woman has a much thicker layer of fat just beneath the skin than any normal man. The fat acts as a heat insulator and keeps her warm."

How To Say It

THE article on Gwrych Castle by David Clayton (John Bull, January 31) is marred by an all-too-common blemish. "Gwrych (pronounced goo-reek)" forsooth! No "ch" is pronounced in Welsh other than as a Scotsman pronounces it in "loch." Judging by the fair rendering any Englishman can give to "braw, bricht

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

FELICITY GRAY

the ballet girl who put TV on its toes

Letters intended for publication should be as brief as possible and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

moonlicht nicht" when he feels so inclined, one is tempted to ask why he should eschew the guttural "ch." Is it because he is too refained?—M. A. WILLIAMS, Dol y coed, Nantgaredig, Carmarthen.

Out Of Class

MY twelve-year-old son told me that his art master at school gave the class a subject to draw — two men playing cards in a public house. The law forbids the pub to anyone under the age of eighteen, but, even so, this seems an odd subject to give to a class of children.—MRS. W. E. C., Peterborough.

Village Tycoon

THE Staffordshire village butcher who repairs shoes ("Free Speech," January 10) is surpassed by a shopkeeper here. He is in business as a fish and chips fryer, ice-cream salesman, boot repairer and hairdresser. His Christian name is Jack.—F. J. PARSONS, Treverven Cottage, St. Buryan, Cornwall.

Penny Loaf

EVERYONE has a craze for something at some time or other. The current one at my school is a penny brown loaf from the bakery. It is one of the few things we can get for a penny these days, and the loaves are delicious when fresh.—MARY WALKER (aged 14), Borrowdale Road, Wakefield, Yorkshire.

Opinions Differ

WHY is it that the majority of letters published in newspapers and magazines are written from the south of England? Are Southerners more prolific, or do they write better letters?—MRS. FREDA WOOD, Rosehill Road, Burnley, Lancs.

. . . Why are more letters written to periodicals and newspapers from the north of England than the south? Every other address seems to be Lancashire or Yorkshire or Cheshire. Is this because Northerners read and write more or, simply, that there are more of them?—MRS. H. G., Nelson Road, Whitstable, Kent.

Cupboard Sitter

MY sister had a sick hen which she brought into the house and placed in an open cupboard by the fire. It got better after a day or two, and was sent back to the others. The following day, after being let out, the hen flew into the house, went straight to the cupboard, and laid an egg. It does this every morning, and refuses to leave until it has laid.—MISS A. HOGARTH, Duffryn Crescent, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd, Glam.

Forgotten Attic

ARCHITECTS could make better use of the space between the eaves and the roof of a house. With glass instead of slates the loft could be made into a

greenhouse for salads and flowers, or an aviary, a sun-bathing parlour or a quiet reading room.—MRS. ROSILLA CULBERT, Birkenhead, Cheshire.

Cautious Sex

NEARLY every woman passenger on a bus looks behind her at the seat she is leaving to make sure that she has left nothing behind. I seldom see a man do this. Are women more careful, or is it because they are usually carrying bags and parcels from which things may fall?—J. M., Middlesex.

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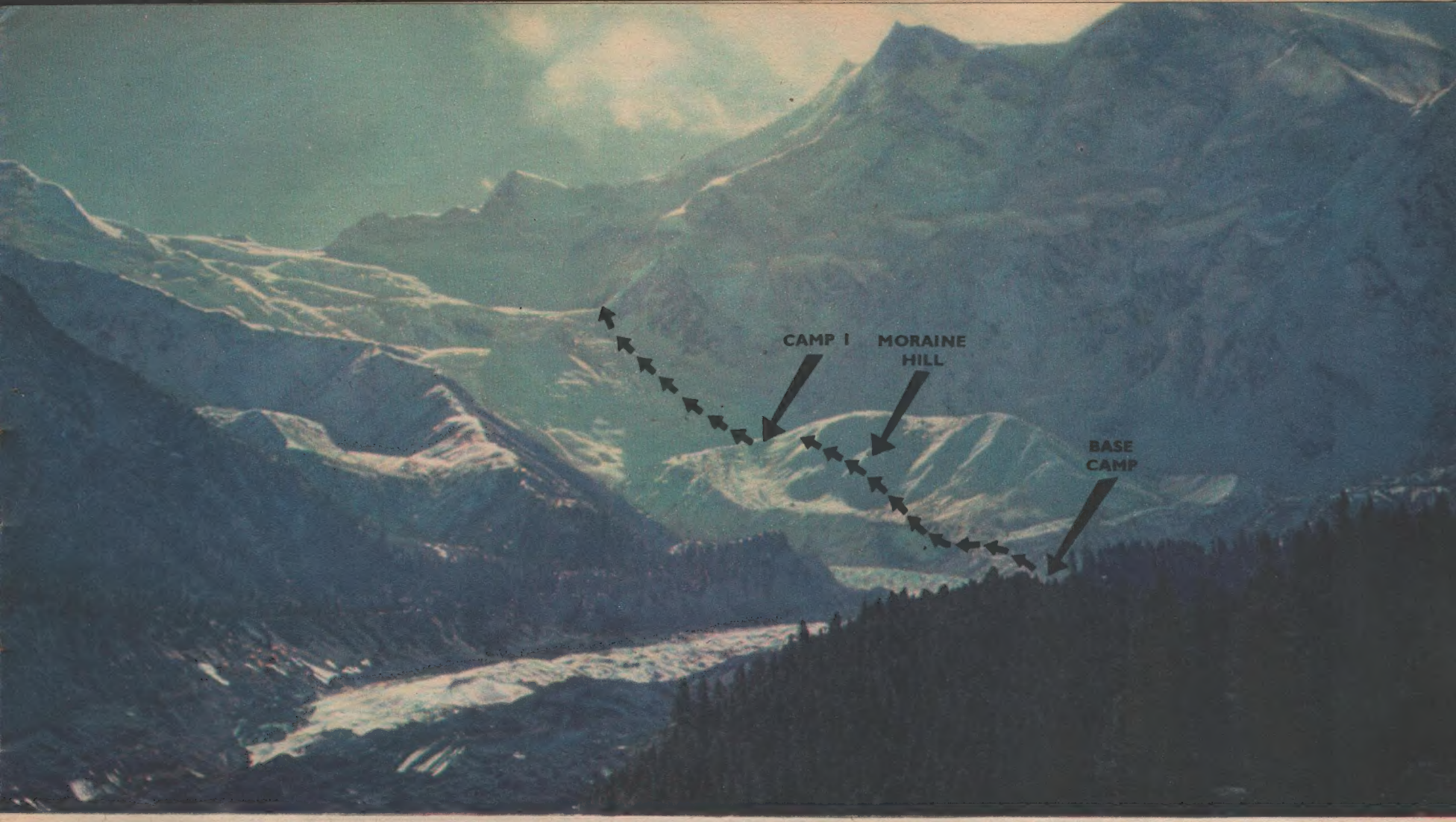
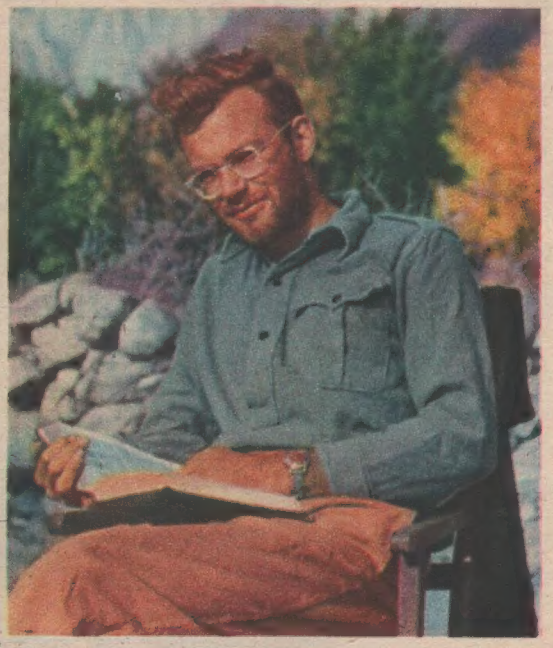


Picture which gives some idea of the immense task of climbing Nanga Parbat. Base camp was at 12,000 feet—four times the height of any mountain in England. The top of Moraine Hill is higher than Mont Blanc. Soon after Camp One was established, the cold compelled Marsh to return to base

I CAME BACK ALONE FROM NANGA PARBAT

by RICHARD MARSH

Part Two of the story of a gallant failure: the final, disastrous stages of a courageous challenge to the world's cruellest mountain



Richard Marsh. When his two comrades failed to return, he began a vain search of the mountain

ALL NIGHT a strong wind howled through the guy ropes of the tent. Every so often a roar made us start up as an avalanche came off the 12,000-foot face above us. We reckoned that we were fairly safe where we were, but on Nanga Parbat one never knows. I wrote in my diary next day: "It is surprising that none of us finds it nerve wracking." But perhaps it was not so surprising. Certainly we were not intending to throw away our lives in one reckless exploit, but none of us was really worried at the possibility of being killed.

We were three young Englishmen, trying to do what no one had ever done before in winter: climb the 20,000-foot main west ridge of Nanga Parbat, the notorious Himalayan mountain, whose name means "The Naked Lady," and on which four out of seven expeditions have met with disaster; none has ever succeeded. If conditions had been favourable, we had contemplated striking for the summit, 26,660 feet high; but already the cold, the weather and the last-minute refusal of our Sherpa porters to climb with us above our base camp had much reduced the chances. Now we were on the trickiest section of the whole route up the mountain. Stretching for one and a half miles between 14,800 feet and 18,000 feet was a tremendous ice-fall. The next few days would be decisive.

It was the turn of Jim Thornley and Bill Crace to go ahead, and they left me alone at Camp One. Tenzing, our chief Sherpa, came up from base camp, and I gave him our letters, testimonials for the porters and an explanatory note to the Pakistan Government. It was November 14, 1950, and I told him that if we had not returned in six weeks—by December 26—they were to make their way back to Gilgit, post our letters and hand the note to the Political Agent. Before he left, Tenzing said he was sorry he could not come on, but he had two children to think about. He hoped I understood and, with tears in his eyes, wished us good luck.

Soon after lunch—chocolate and biscuits—Bill and Jim came back, having had an unsuccessful day. Early on, Bill's feet had frozen up. Then, about an hour out of camp, Jim had put a foot through a snow bridge

and, trying to save himself from falling down the crevasse, he had broken one of his skis. Not long afterwards, Bill fell into another crevasse. Luckily, Jim held him before he was more than three or four feet down, but a heap of snow had fallen over him, which chilled him to the bone. So, having taken the track only a short way higher than the point we had reached the day before, they had had to turn back. Bill's feet were in a bad way and we spent some time rubbing them.

After supper, the three of us crowded into one tent and, by the light of the hurricane lamp, read *Richard II*, each taking several parts. Every evening we would read a Shakespeare play right through and would then fall to discussing things—more often than not, the meal we intended to have at the Savoy Hotel when we got home. Every evening, too, I would read from the Bible. Sometimes Jim and I found ourselves listening to Bill's lengthy reminiscences. He had a precise way of telling his stories, insisting on every detail. Interruptions were fatal. In time, we would lose patience and eventually break into song. He would remonstrate strongly at our lack of good manners, and the whole thing usually ended in a brawl—which did not improve the tent.

Fell Through Snow Bridge

Two-thirds of the day we were in the sleeping bags, and the man who was housemaid was in his nearly all the time. It was the only way we could keep warm. For the same reason, we never washed, and when we went to sleep at eight o'clock we were almost fully dressed. All that we took off were our boots and windproof jackets. The jackets, together with the rope, made a pillow, and the boots were put between the inner and outer sections of our sleeping bags, to prevent them from freezing solid.

The following day, Jim and I went out again. Not long after we had left, I fell through a snow bridge which had weakened since yesterday. Jim was so quick in leaning back on the rope that I managed to scramble back on to the near edge of the crevasse.

As an experiment, because my boots had proved to be too tight, I had put on only one pair of socks, but it was not a success. Though I could now wriggle my toes, and though we were going up a firm path, one pair of socks was just not enough to keep me warm. Gradually my feet got colder, and by the time we had reached the end of our track there was no feeling up to my ankles. A little while later we stopped. I sat down and took off my boots and socks. We rubbed them for twenty minutes and my ankles were just beginning to have faint feelings of life when suddenly there was a great roar from the north face behind us.

"We've had it this time," Jim shouted.

It Was Pointless To Run

High above, and only just to our right, a terrific avalanche was hurtling down the mountain. It was as if a great cauldron of milk had suddenly boiled over and was spilling down the mountainside filling and flowing over the irregularities.

"Get down. This one's close."

With my feet uncovered, we huddled together and locked our arms round each other. It was impossible to tell whether the avalanche would hit us, and in any case it was pointless to try to run. The roar rose in a crescendo. Then it was past us and we were breathing freely once more.

"My feet—they're not so good." I remarked.

Without thinking, we started rubbing them again, and before we knew it we were enveloped in the violent blast of wind which follows an avalanche. For two minutes, a hissing cloud of needle-like ice fragments stung our faces, our hands and my feet. By the time it was all over we could not stop ourselves shivering, and our beards, moustaches and eyebrows were frozen solid.

The prime need now was to get our bodies warm. Almost in despair at such luck, we put my socks and boots back on, and tried to get on with the track-making. I took the lead, hoping that the vigorous exercise would make me warm. But my feet were too far gone. After half an hour I said I was sorry but we would have to go back to camp.

Before we went to sleep I broached the question of the next day.

Jim said: "It's up to you two."

"It's my turn to have a shot at it," Bill said, "but I don't expect to do much better than yesterday."

We asked Jim what he thought of doing if we both found we could not go on. Rather typically, he said he would probably go on by himself. We both said we thought it would be unwise, but left it until the situation arose. Just as we settled down to sleep, eight hours after our return, my feet began to thaw.

Hope Of An Easier Route

The next day went well. Bill managed to keep a little feeling in his feet, and they came back with the news that they had found an easier route. They had taken the track another five hundred feet up the ice-fall and then, from a vantage point on top of a pinnacle of ice, they had seen a smooth depression running between the ice-fall and the rocky face to the right. There would still be part of the ice-fall to negotiate and, since the depression was nearer the north face, the danger of avalanches would be increased; but undoubtedly it would be very much quicker that way. Along the present route we might have been stuck in the ice-fall indefinitely.

Naturally, we were very bucked, if only at the prospect of getting out of Camp One. This was our fifth night there and it was getting squalid. With a sewn-in groundsheet, it is difficult to clean out the tent. Thus, since we were now bedding down into the ice, pools of icy water from the snow we had unavoidably brought in on our boots were swilling around the floor. Mixed with them were paraffin and soup because, in a crowded tent seven feet long, four wide and three foot six high, one cannot avoid knocking things over. In Bill's tent, candlewax was stuck everywhere, as Jim and I had the only hurricane lamp. Outside, there was a pile of empty tins, and the snow was littered with tea-leaves, food scraps, bits of paper and dirt. And in our hurry to get back into the warmth of the tent we could not afford to be choosy over filling the saucepans with clean snow when we needed water.

On top of all this, there had been no sun that day and it had been too cold to air the sleeping bags. So they were very damp. The cooking and eating utensils were being used for porridge and pemmican and bully beef without cleaning; and everything tasted of paraffin. We ourselves were not too clean, with several months' beard and a week or two without a wash. Eyes were gummed up and we felt a little itchy. And the Primuses had only to light back once or twice to blacken our faces.

The Critical Day For Me

That night, I lay awake thinking and decided that the next day would be a critical one as far as I was concerned. We were all to take loads eight hundred feet up the glacier and dump them; then, while one returned for more, the others were to reconnoitre the new route up as far as the site for Camp Two. I would put on every scrap of clothing and do everything possible to keep my feet warm. And if I was unsuccessful, I would not delay the others by staying with them.

With sixty-five-pound loads on our backs it was hard work. Despite the below-zero temperature, I had hopes at first of making the grade after all, but though I wriggled my toes and stamped my feet almost incessantly, they

Last picture of Bill and Jim, taken by Marsh before he left them. They were then at 16,000 feet

Tenzing, the Sherpa head porter. With Marsh, he was nearly killed by an avalanche. Ice blocks the size of a house landed a hundred yards from them

became relentlessly worse. By the time we reached the site for our dump everything from my ankles downwards was numb once more. Bill's feet were a little better, so he and Jim went forward. When I got back to the tent my fingers had gone dead, too. I rubbed them in vain till Bill and Jim returned. They had made good progress and had reached 16,000 feet. They had also found a site for Camp Two. We had supper, read *Troilus and Cressida*, then Bill and Jim turned to me and asked what I was going to do. I said I thought I had better go down, but would let them know definitely in the morning.

Toughest Man I Had Met

In the morning, Bill and Jim said nothing until, over breakfast, I announced my decision to go down. Little time was wasted talking. There had not been an ill or hasty word between any of us all the time we had been on the mountain. Jim and Bill weighed out a month's food and set aside an adequate supply of paraffin. They decided to take the two tents and both Primuses, because Jim said he now intended to go on until he met a really insuperable obstacle —whatever, in his language, that was. He was the toughest man I had ever met; the greater the obstacle and the opposition, the greater his enjoyment and the better he seemed to go. After breakfast, with sixty pounds on his back, he almost sauntered up the eight hundred feet to the dump at the rate of two thousand feet an hour.

While he was away, Bill and I packed up the camp. Bill was not too confident, and, perhaps, was wondering whether he, too, should turn back. He must have felt, as I did, that the odds on a disaster had now shortened considerably. He reckoned that the cold would force him to come down within two or three days. He told me then that he had never thought about it before, but while writing that last letter to his mother he had realized just how much he did want to come back.

But when Jim returned, neither of us voiced any doubts. We buried a small emergency dump of paraffin, waterproof matches, and food alongside a nearby rock, then carried the last three loads up to the higher dump. There we said farewell.

We arranged that, at one o'clock on every even date, either the Sherpas or I would climb to the top of Moraine Hill and with our field-glasses we would try to see each other. I took a last photograph of them and set off down the mountain to collect my pack from Camp One.

Alone on the silent glacier, I allowed myself to get depressed. It was a foolish mistake, because depression has a bad effect mentally and physically, and already I was getting fatigued. For a day or two now my feet had been quite dead. I was covering a greater distance than usual over a track which had been partially snow-covered, and I was without skis.

Snow Nearly Defeated Me

Soon I was going very badly, stumbling constantly in waist-deep snow and stopping every few yards for a rest. It was an uncanny sensation because my spirit seemed to be losing all resistance. I did not want to go on. I just wanted to sit down. I had to concentrate all my dwindling willpower on keeping going.

Perhaps fortunately, the Sherpa porters spotted me, and they met me some way above the advanced base camp. Had it been much farther, I think the snow would have won. My toes were all without feeling for more than a week afterwards.

That day was November 18. For me it prefaced the most nerve-racking month I have ever spent. For my friends, Jim Thornley and Bill Crace, it was the beginning of the most courageous and magnificent fortnight of their lives. I recorded it in my diary:

November 19: Avalanches fell all through the day, some near their route.

November 20: Tenzing says this high, flecked cloud is a bad sign. The wind has changed and he says it means more snow. All afternoon heavy cloud covered much of the mountain.

November 22: The sky cleared. Three of us went to the top of Moraine Hill, at 15,000 feet, but we could only see their tracks in the snow. Ang Temba says they have moved the tents.

Two Hundred Feet An Hour

November 24: Phu Tharkay, who said he had dreamed of my return to base a day or two before I arrived, dreamed last night that Jim and Bill returned today. But at midday Tenzing spotted them from Moraine Hill about a thousand feet above the dump where I had left them six days ago. That put them at about 17,000 feet. They were moving up slowly—two hundred feet in the hour he watched. The tracks which I saw two days ago were no longer visible. If wind-blown snow has covered them, it is all right; if it is new snow, it is not so good.

November 26: Quite fine, though more snow fell in the night. No sign of tracks, camp or Jim and Bill.

November 27: We saw them carrying loads at 17,500 feet. The easy-going ground above the ice-fall is now four hundred feet above them. We could only distinguish two tiny black specks moving up the vast mountainside. It must require some courage to keep pressing on in these conditions. They have now been up there for more than a fortnight.

That night it snowed heavily, and the snow continued the next day and on November 29.

November 30: Thirty degrees of frost last night down here. During the day, the wind blew

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The Cop and the Copperknob

by E. C. HORNSBY

ILLUSTRATED BY CLIXBY WATSON

It was her first night in England—and she spent it in jail. What a welcome for a red-haired O'Reilly!

"Why not admit you're Nellie Biggs?" he said.

WE DOCKED AT TILBURY early in the morning. By the time we had been through the Customs and travelled up to London it was mid-afternoon. I drove straight to my hotel, signed in, went to my room and freshened up.

I decided not to unpack, but to go out again and have a little preview of London.

Being a woman, I eventually finished up in one of the big stores. Finally, I went to the ladies' powder-room and sat down at one of the tables. I had one of those big zipper hold-alls and I put it on the floor beside me. In addition, I had my handbag with my purse and make-up. I got to work touching up my face. I've got copper hair and a fiery temperament; when they're working together I look great; other times that hair makes me look a bit pale and colourless.

Presently a woman came and sat down at the next table. She put her bag, of the same type as mine, on the floor, too. I hardly noticed her, except that I saw her colouring was something like mine. But hers was out of a bottle and mine isn't.

She left before I did. When I followed her out, the woman in attendance gave me a rather careful look. At the foot of the stairs was another woman in a grey, official-looking costume. She also gave me an odd look. I stepped through the revolving doors on to the pavement, and a big commissionaire came up to me. I thought he was going to ask if I wanted a taxi. Instead he said, very politely: "Excuse me, madam, would you mind coming back into the store? I think the management want a word with you."

I went back with him. Perhaps they had heard I was over from Australia and had some special scheme of welcome.

Inside the door, the woman in the grey costume stepped up.

"Will you come this way, madam?" she said, also very politely. They took me into an office. A man sat at a desk; a girl stood at his side. The commissionaire saluted and left us.

"Is this the lady?" said the man to the girl.

"Yes, that's her," said the girl.

The woman nodded to the man at the desk. "I am a store detective," she said formally to me. "We have reason to believe you were taking things out of the store you have not paid for. Would you mind turning out your bag, please?"

I stared in amazement, then my temper ran away with me. They listened patiently until I had finished, as though it was a usual thing.

"You can see for yourself," I said, and flung the hold-all on the desk.

"Thank you, madam," said the woman quietly, unzipped it and lifted out a new pair of gloves, a twin set and some stockings. They all looked at me. I just stared dazedly at those things, wondering how they could have got there.

"It is the policy of the firm in such cases always to prefer a charge," said the man, rising. "If you will accompany us, a car will take us to the police station. We can do this very quietly."

Of course, I had to go with them. In the car the explanation dawned on me; that woman in the powder-room had switched bags. It was horribly embarrassing, but of course it could soon be cleared up.

At the station they asked my name, and I told them it was Janet O'Reilly and gave them the name of the hotel I was staying at. The store people made their charge and I was warned I needn't say anything if I didn't want to.

I had plenty to say. I told them about the woman in the powder-room, and they listened, writing it down carefully. Then they read it back to me and I signed it. They made no comment, but it dawned on me they didn't believe me. I asked them to telephone the hotel for confirmation. I had papers in my trunk to prove my identity and a certificate from the Governor-General calling on the British Government to give me any help I wanted.

THE police sergeant telephoned the hotel. I could only hear one end, of course, but it sounded all right—at first. Miss O'Reilly had arrived that afternoon. Yes, she had gone out. It was what followed that flabbergasted me. It seemed Miss O'Reilly had come back and was just sitting down to enjoy her dinner.

"You'd better go away and think it over," said the police sergeant, replacing the receiver, and they took me off to a bare little room and left me to myself for an hour. Then he had me back.

"Are you sure your name isn't Nellie Biggs?" he said.

"Of course not," I flared. "I've never heard that name before."

"We found this ration book in your bag," he said, and held it up.

"I tell you it isn't my bag," I fumed. "This woman is an impostor. Can't you see—after she planted the bag on me she went back to my hotel and is passing herself off as me."

He leaned back and looked at me.

"Why don't you make it easier for yourself, Nellie, and co-operate?" he said. "You'll only get it hotter this way."

Of course I wasn't going to put up with that, so they put a detective-sergeant on to the case and he went off and fetched this woman back with him. I was reasonably sure it was the one who had sat next to me in the powder-room.

But talk about nerve! She was as self-possessed and calm as I was excitable and heated. I shot all sorts of questions at her, but the amazing thing was, I couldn't trip her up. She knew everything about me and about my life in Australia. I began to wonder if I was going off my rocker.

The police were very polite to the woman. They asked for her signature—and again it was more like mine than mine was—and then they sent her off with apologies, and put me in a cell.

I was nearly at my wits' end by this time, and became almost hysterical every time they called me Nellie Biggs. They were trying hard to pin the name on me, and had got into touch with a hostel where Nellie Biggs had stayed. But nobody seemed to have a very clear recollection of her.

I asked the detective-sergeant to try to contact the people on the ship—it was a cargo ship with passenger accommodation. I'd got friendly

She turned away quickly. There was a terrible itch in her palm to wipe the grin off his face

with a steward and I reckoned he'd speak for me.

They kept on at me to be "sensible" and not give everybody so much trouble, and in the end, weeping with rage, I went to sleep. It was my first night in the Old Country.

IN the morning I had my first ride in a prison van, and we all turned up at the magistrates' court.

She was there in one of my own frocks. She just said in a quiet, ladylike way that she was Janet O'Reilly, from Melbourne, Australia, on a visit to this country. She gave the fullest details of the trip, the names of the officers, the date we sailed, the date we docked and all about my life in Australia. There was no doubt she was convincing. When I told my story it sounded pretty thin even to me.

The magistrate looked at me over his glasses.

"Assuming this switching of bags occurred," he said, "how would this lady know which hotel you were staying at? Were there any papers in your own hold-all?"

"No—none at all. I left them all at the hotel," I said, remembering that I'd been advised to do so by the steward on the boat.

The magistrate leaned back and nodded as if his mind was made up.

At that moment, the steward from the ship arrived. He was a neat little man with a bald head, black hair at the sides and very quick, alert eyes. We'd spent many evenings yarning together. I was very glad to see him now. He stood up in the box, identified the other woman as Janet O'Reilly, looked me straight in the face and said he'd never seen me before.

That finished it. The magistrate said there was not the slightest doubt in the case, apologized that the other girl should have had her holiday so unfortunately interrupted and turned on me like a whiplash. Addressing me as Nellie Biggs, he said I was not only a shoplifter—and he was determined to put down shoplifting with a heavy hand—but I had wasted everybody's time with a pack of lies and caused an innocent lady great distress. I would go to jail for six months.

I looked at him dumbfounded, tried to argue it out, but they hustled me below, searched me, took away my handbag and locked me in a cell. Later that day I was taken to Holloway, checked in, stripped, bathed, weighed and measured, given a uniform, allocated a cell, and the following morning, there I was, sitting with a crowd of other women stitching away at little cotton bags while a wardress sat facing us.

I did that for four months.

After five o'clock they'd lock me in my cell for the night and I'd sit there incandescent with indignation. It was that which really kept me going. Had I been guilty like those other poor creatures I think it would have broken me, but I was determined not to be broken, and in some way my spirits rose to meet it.

I thought of running a one-girl resistance movement, and perhaps going on hunger strike, but I knew that would only lead to a lot of trouble. I'm pretty sensible when my temper doesn't run away with me, and I realized the prison officers were only there to see I had my punishment and weren't concerned whether it was justified or not, so I knuckled under, got on with the officials I liked and side-stepped those I didn't.

When they let me out I had no more than the clothes I stood up in, and nowhere to go, but a discharged prisoners' charity took me over, fixed me up with a modest outfit and found me a job. I was still Nellie Biggs to them, of course. If anybody would listen I'd try to tell them I wasn't, but it only got them rattled.

I was certain of one thing—as soon as I had a bit of money I was going to track down that girl. The first thing I did when I was let out was to walk all the way to the hotel, but, of course, she'd already left and they wouldn't tell me where.

I reckoned if the law wouldn't put it right I'd take it out of her hide myself and put up with the consequences. You can't treat a red-haired O'Reilly that way.

MY first job was dish washing in a café, but it wasn't long before I was serving at the tables. I was saving money and reckoned to engage a private inquiry agent. But it didn't work out like that.

I was going back to the hostel where I lodged, one night. The tube was crowded and I was wedged up against a dark, foreign-looking fellow with a small moustache and a wicked mouth. I was reading his paper over his shoulder, but he was a meany and kept folding it smaller. Then a young fellow came and stood alongside. He was a nice, well-built chap with good shoulders, a very clean-shaven face and eyes that looked at you straight. He took several straight peeks at me. I'd washed my hair the night before, and was glad of it.

Then I saw him do something I wouldn't have believed. He slid his hand in the fat man's side pocket, fished out a cigarette case and shoved it into his own. I went red as fire. I had an idea the young man knew I'd seen and was waiting for me to start something.

He took another quick look at me, and then slipped his hand again into the other man's pocket and withdrew a lighter, a neat little gold affair. Then he looked full at me as though saying: "What are you going to do about it?"

The train drew up, the fat man got out and I hopped out after him. I didn't want anything to do with the affair. But there was the young man just behind me.

"Tell him I've pinched his case, you fathead," breathed a voice in my ear. It was so authoritative, I obeyed without thinking—the effect of prison, I suppose. I ran after the fat man, grabbed his arm.

"Excuse me, your cigarette case has just been stolen. I saw this man take it."

The fat man turned on me, swift as a rattlesnake; then he hesitated, put his hand in his

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TAKE IT FROM ME (7) by JIMMY EDWARDS

My first broadcast with Joy and Dick

They were unknowns—and success in the new show was vital. Broke and out of regular work, Jimmy decided the occasion called for a party. Then came the morning after . . .

The stars of radio's hit show, *Take It From Here:* Joy Nichols, Jimmy Edwards and Dick Bentley

I CARRIED ON at the Windmill Theatre for nearly a year and a half, and had just started a further six weeks' engagement when a crisis developed. On the first day of the new show I was told that Van Damm, the theatre manager, had made a new rule; everyone in the cast was now required to sign a book at the stage door half an hour before the first house.

Van Damm himself was away when I received this piece of information, so I ignored it and carried on as before. Then Miss Mitelle, who took charge in his absence, sent for me. "This is nonsense," I said to her. "It's all very well for those who have to be on stage at the beginning of the performance, but I don't go on until much later in the show. Do you realize that this means I would have to arrive in the West End at a quarter to twelve, sign the book, then just hang around with nothing to do until I'm due to go on? I won't do it!"

For the rest of that week I maintained my defiance, and then Van Damm returned. I was summoned to his office, a big room, nicely furnished, with a small aquarium at one end and masses of flowers at the other. As I entered through the door behind his desk, he swivelled around on his chair and spoke through his half-chewed cigar. "Come in, Jimmy, sit down." Then his face darkened. "What's this I hear about you not signing the book?"

There was an awkward pause while I summoned up my courage. "It's true," I said. "I can't see any reason for it. I haven't missed an entrance since I've been here."

"I've made a rule and everybody's got to stick to it," Van Damm said. "No exceptions."

So He Got The Sack

I was nervous, but stubborn. "I just can't do it," I said. I could see that he was getting angry, and I didn't really want to force the issue. But I had gone too far now and it didn't seem as if either of us was going to compromise.

"Either you sign the book or you leave," Van Damm said grimly. "You may give me your decision later on today." All that afternoon, both on and off the stage, my mind dwelt on this ultimatum. I had no other stage work in the offing and I could not afford to rely on odd radio engagements. But I didn't like being forced to do something I felt was unjust. I went back to him. "I'm sorry," I said, "I can't see my way to agreeing to sign that book."

Van Damm was adamant. "All right. You leave on Saturday." I think we were both sorry that things had turned out like this. The Old Man had hoped that I would stay at the Windmill until I became really well known. I think he had a sneaking feeling that I had been offered

Jimmy and Joy Nichols as they appeared together in *Navy Mixture* in 1947. At first, Joy thought that Jimmy was "stand-offish and grumpy"

The perils of slapstick comedy: in the film *Trouble In The Air* Jimmy's face was pushed into a trifle. What he said is unprintable

another more lucrative job, and that I had trumped up this business of the signing of the book as a means of leaving the theatre. This, of course, was not so.

I have always been grateful to him for giving me my first professional engagement and for allowing me the privilege of using his audience as guinea pigs. The Windmill is a wonderful theatre in which to make a start, but, paradoxically, you cannot really hit the top line until you have left.

Outside the theatre is a board on which are inscribed the names of a number of people who have become famous after they had left the Windmill. It includes Jean Kent, Eric Barker, Richard Murdoch, Michael Howard, Harold Berens, Arthur English, Peter Sellers, Michael Bentine, Harry Secombe, and many others. I could not suppress a surge of satisfaction when, a few weeks after Van Damm sacked me, I saw that my name had been added to the list.

Frankness Did Not Pay

While I was still working at the Windmill, Geraldo, the famous bandleader, heard me on one of my occasional B.B.C. performances. Later he invited me to call on him. I went to his posh offices in Bond Street and found him seated behind an enormous desk. "How would you like to come on a short tour with me and my band?" he asked.

As it happened, I had some free time. Van Damm had given me a six weeks' holiday between shows and I expected that I would be able to get his permission. I told Geraldo I would be delighted to get some music hall experience. He fixed me with a calculating eye. "How much are you getting paid at the Windmill?" he asked. Too eager, as ever, to tell the truth, I blurted out: "Twenty-five pounds."

"I'll give you thirty," he said immediately.

I bit my tongue. I had made the classical blunder in show business. If I had told him I was getting £50, he would probably have offered me £60. Since then I have never told anybody how much money I was earning. I always leave these tricky negotiations to my agent.

I cannot understand why some artists are for ever boasting about the enormous sums of money they are paid. This, I think, is the height of bad taste. Not only that, it fosters a belief that one has money to chuck about. I remember once, in an article in a Sunday newspaper about Peter Brough and the colossal fees that he was supposed to be paid, the writer mentioned, in passing, how much he thought Dick Bentley and I were getting. That very week, my charlady asked me for a rise and, incredible though it may seem, so did Dick's.

We were to open with a week at the Glasgow Empire. On the way north we broke our journey at Blackpool for a Sunday concert at the Opera House. The theatre was packed, and I could not suppress a slight feeling of apprehension. Though I had gained great confidence from my experiences at the Windmill, I was now going on in front of an audience at least ten times as large. To my immense relief, as I stalked on to the stage in my professorial kit, a great wave of laughter came up to meet me.

I enjoyed that first music hall tour. We visited Glasgow, Birmingham and Finsbury Park, and finished at Sheffield. On the last night at Sheffield, the boys in the band decided to play a little joke on me. When I gave them the cue to start my trombone music they all played it a semitone down. The idea of this, of course, was to confuse me so much that I would not be able to drop my own note down to match theirs. In the end, the joke was on them. While they were waiting, wide-mouthed, for my complete collapse, I went on with the solo and left them all behind. The audience must have wondered why all of us were laughing so much that we could scarcely continue with the act.

Compliment From Band

When we were exchanging farewells, one of the boys shook me warmly by the hand. We laughed about the practical joke. "That was a bit of fun," I said. "Yes," he replied. "That's what we call a lumber. We don't lumber people we don't like." Gerry and his boys and I have been firm friends ever since.

Luckily, before I left the Windmill—though I had no prospects for further work on the music halls—I had managed to get a booking in a radio series. Some weeks before I got the sack, Peter Waring had arranged an all-star broadcast and variety show from the Naval Barracks at Chatham. The cast included such well-known stars as Richard Murdoch and Kenneth Horne. I was included merely to bolster up the concert after the broadcast, but, when the show was over, I was introduced to Charles Maxwell, a B.B.C. producer, who had come along as an interested onlooker. "That's a very funny act you've got there, Edwards," Maxwell said. I thanked him and thought no more about it.

I did not know, at the time, that he was planning to re-vamp *Navy Mixture*, a radio show which had been running for about six years. Later, when Charles Maxwell asked me to join *Navy Mixture*, I jumped at the chance to enlarge my radio activities.

Blonde From Australia

About then I left the Windmill, and for some time the only work I did was in *Navy Mixture*. Before the first programme, Charles Maxwell telephoned me. "Can you be at the *Radio Times's* office for a photograph session?" he asked. "I want you to pose with the new commère of the show. She's a young Australian who will also sing. Her name is Joy Nichols."

I had never heard of Miss Nichols before: she had just arrived in Britain with a batch of recordings and a considerable reputation in Australia. The photographer asked us to pose together at the microphone. I had the feeling that the blonde young lady didn't like me, and I certainly didn't think our careers would later be so completely intertwined.

Much later, I asked Joy about that first meeting. "You looked so stand-offish and grumpy," she said laughingly. "Of course I didn't like you—then." I am glad to say she understands me better now. Nevertheless, it didn't take me long to realize that Joy was both talented and versatile. She sang every type of number, and sang it well. Not only that, she was often dragged into my professor's act to do a character voice, and could always produce the exact effect the producer wanted with effortless ease.

The final spot in the show each week was given over to a guest artist—a comedian in most cases—and one day I saw the name Dick Bentley mentioned as the week's guest star. "Who is this chap Bentley?" I asked Joy.

"He's a fellow-Australian, and he's very good," Joy said. He *was* good. In fact, he got on so well in his spot that he was asked to make a return visit.

Navy Mixture, surprisingly enough, was intended primarily for the Navy, and was heard

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I asked Michael why people were acting oddly towards me. Looking straight ahead, he said: "You're asking me to repeat a rumour nobody believes"

Fortune is a Woman

by ***WINSTON GRAHAM***

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

There were rumours about me in the City—and Sarah was being blackmailed. I was almost at my wits' end

WHEN SARAH AND I went to Paris for our honeymoon, we thought our troubles were over. We'd come through a wretched period of suspicion and misunderstanding after the inquest on her first husband, Tracey Moreton. Now she was Mrs. Oliver Branwell. We were in love, Paris was beautiful and the future looked bright.

Tracey had died in a disastrous fire at his Kent home, Lowis Manor. Sarah had been away at the time. The coroner brought in a verdict of "death by misadventure." I had no reason to quarrel with it: my concern was how the fire had started.

I'm an insurance claims adjuster, and I had assessed the damage. What I couldn't tell anyone except Sarah—not even Michael Abercrombie, my partner—was that I was in the house the night it was burnt down. I'd stumbled over Tracey's body. He was dead—I could have sworn it—and yet, a few moments later, I thought I heard his asthmatic breathing in the darkness.

I'd gone down to Lowis to look for evidence of fraud. For Tracey had put in another fire claim some months before: a valuable painting had been destroyed—so he said. Yet I had proof that the original had been sold to a dealer by an unknown girl.

For months I'd been through hell, thinking that the girl was Sarah, thinking that she had been party to an ugly tangle of arson, forgery and fraud. I suspected that Tracey's cultured, catty friends—a self-styled connoisseur named Clive Fisher, his sister Ambrosine and the others—had only tolerated me because I was useful.

Maybe they had. For the moment I didn't care. Sarah was innocent: that much I knew. I had shown her photograph to the man who had bought the picture; he'd never seen her before.

Now Tracey was dead—according to the inquest. With all his faults, he'd been a likeable chap. I'd liked his mother, too—old Mrs. Moreton, with her strong sense of tradition and family loyalty, though I thought she'd fussed too much about her son's asthma. I suppose it was natural enough: she suffered from it herself occasionally.

But now that Sarah and I were married, I wanted to forget the whole thing. I hoped that Sarah would forget it, too.

And then one day a small package arrived at our Paris hotel room. It looked like a belated wedding present. We opened it with an excitement that turned suddenly to cold horror. There was no letter: just one small anonymous object—Tracey's signet ring.

PART 4

Back To Reality

I SAID: "Drink this: it'll make you feel better. No, take a gulp; sips won't help." Sarah coughed. "It's all right. I'm all right now." She slid her legs off the bed and put up the usual hand to her hair. "What a fool."

"I should like to get hold of the fellow who

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Report on my battle with the sneeze

by DON EVERITT

Half the people of Britain are victims of allergies. They cost millions a year. Yet many doctors still do not believe in them

IT WAS A SUNDAY AFTERNOON late in May, an ideally sunny afternoon for a boy to take a girl for a country walk. At a secluded spot on the river bank we had stopped for a while, and we were lying on our backs on the grass, looking at the brilliant blue of the sky.

We were talking in spells—idly, jocularly, seriously, then not at all. But all the time an ambitious thought was running through my head. This was my first date, and the thought had been there since we had set out. Should I kiss her? More important, could I?

Presently, I pushed myself up on one elbow and turned towards her. She was tantalizingly close. I pretended to make myself more comfortable and wriggled a little closer. The talk fizzled out. My pulse throbbed heavily. The world shrank to the space we occupied. I felt my face getting closer to hers.

And then it happened. It began as a tickle behind my nostrils, and spread with a rush. I turned my face only just in time—it was no ordinary sneeze. I used my handkerchief quickly and tried to get back to romance. But the tickle behind my nose was still there. I sneezed again and again. The moment was lost. I mumbled a miserable apology.

Yearly Attack Had Begun

Within a few minutes I was sneezing continuously. My nose was streaming, my face felt puffy, my eyes were itching and watering and bloodshot. I said that it looked as if my yearly attack of hay fever had begun. But there was no sympathy, only—it seemed to me then—impatience and scorn. Soon, we were walking briskly and coldly back to town, with me talking wretchedly and nasally about grass pollen and trying in vain to cover up its effects.

This happened in my teens. In countless other ways hay fever has been embarrassing and distressing me every summer with monotonous regularity since I was seven years old. At school it interfered with learning and ruined sports. It turned normal boyish summertime pursuits into little ordeals. It spoiled family holidays. When I started work it affected my concentration and composure. And all this physical discomfort has been exaggerated psychologically—particularly in my teens—by the reaction of others to the complaint. For few people who do not have hay fever take it seriously. And yet, allergies—hay fever, asthma, urticaria, allergic eczema and migraine are the main types—are an increasingly serious medical and social problem.

In Britain today one person in every ten—five million in all—suffers from a serious form of allergy; one in every two has a minor type. Of far greater social importance is the ability of allergies to kill and incapacitate. Asthma, which develops in some cases of hay fever, is said to kill three thousand people every year. Allergies take more of the doctors' time than all anaemias. And the 147,000 yearly hospital admissions for allergies cost the country about £3 million.

Deaths Could Be Prevented

Research into allergy, which is actually a relatively new branch of medicine, has produced three even more striking facts. First, allergics are increasing; secondly, quite simple treatments could practically wipe out the deaths and incapacity; thirdly, allergy plays a far bigger part in disease than was realized only a few years ago.

An unknown but certainly appreciable proportion of chronic bronchitis, naso-pharingitis and sinusitis cases are now known to have an allergic basis. It has been estimated that allergy is behind one in every five cases of industrial dermatitis, which is the main cause of lost time among the diseases entitled to compensation. And bacterial allergy, in which the patient becomes allergic to the bacteria in his own body as a result of infection or immunization, has still wider implications. Already, for instance, it is

Hay fever treatment. Different pollens are injected, and the reaction reveals the allergen

Weal reaction to injected allergens. Best cure is to avoid them

This girl is fond of cats—but their fur reduces her to tears

virtually unquestioned as one of the factors causing rheumatic fever. As one allergy research doctor says: "The boundaries of allergy are by no means clearly defined or finally settled."

Against all the statistics and discoveries, allergy (and its sufferers) are still contending with the traditional reactions to anything new. For even among doctors, indifference, impatience and disbelief are not uncommon.

In the *British Medical Journal* not long ago, a doctor wrote: "Too often, in the past, cases of allergy have been treated by one method only, to the exclusion of all others, and this has led to pessimism and neglect. This is also true of the present time. In no disease is this defeatist outlook so marked as in asthma, and yet I know of few chronic disabling conditions in which such excellent results can be obtained from a properly planned régime." I can vouch for this attitude personally; I have met the you've-got-it-and-you've-got-to-put-up-with-it diagnosis.

Everything Was Explained

Within the last few years, however, research has brought advances in treatment, and several allergy clinics have been set up in various parts of Britain. Recently, I attended one of them as a patient. And the first thing that impressed me in this "properly planned régime" was the co-operation with the patient: everything was explained to me; all my questions were answered.

Allergy, I was told, is not just a dislike but is an "altered reaction" in the body. In my case, I would have an exaggerated susceptibility to something which I inhaled or swallowed or touched. After some questioning, it appeared fairly straightforward. The hay fever had begun when I was seven during a day in the woods, had recurred yearly about the beginning of June, and had usually lasted two months: this indicated that the allergen would be grass pollen. Because I also had a reaction in a dry, hot room at other times of the year, it was possible that I was, too, slightly susceptible to house dust.

But not all cases are as simple as mine. People have been proved allergic to several thousand substances, ranging from pollen grains and mould spores and dusts to silk, feathers, animal dandruff, yeast, milk, chocolate, jewellery, face powder and drugs. Some patients have reacted solely to one unusual substance, others to half a dozen common ones.

One man had asthma only when in contact with camel dandruff. Another had eczema always, urticaria at times, had had asthma since he was two, sneezed in the presence of animals, and invariably had swollen hands at Christmas. He was found to have big reactions to horse and cat hair, cabbage, pollen, goose feathers, silk and holly. As part of his treatment he had to stop wearing all clothing made of silk; even a silk tie brought a rash on his chin.

It All Began With Romance

There was also the young girl who developed a rash when she became friendly with a fishmonger. After she had been treated for the fish allergy, she found a new young man who worked among horses. She immediately began to develop a rash again—and had to be desensitized against horsehair.

Quite often, allergics are choosy, being affected by cow's milk but not goat's, by hen eggs but not duck, by squirrel fur but no other. The doctor at the clinic explained that my hay fever was very probably caused by two or three of the many hundreds of pollens.

"No one knows," he said, "what causes the allergen to take effect in different parts of the body with different people. It is known, however, that the type of reaction is usually fairly constant, and that certain kinds of allergen are more likely to cause certain reactions. For instance, sensitivity to foods tends to produce urticaria and eczema; to pollen, hay fever; to dust and animal dandruff, asthma. Certain reactions are also more likely in certain age groups—eczema in the under-fives, tending to be replaced after that age by asthma. Neglected hay fever often turns into asthma."

Usually, it takes only a minute quantity of the allergen to bring on an attack. To illustrate this for my special interest, the doctor put a tiny drop of mixed grass pollen grains in solution on my wrist and just flicked the skin beneath with the tip of a hypodermic needle. A minute later the spot began to itch; three minutes later a white weal the size of a sixpence had developed and inflammation surrounded it. Other cases illustrate this point. One man was allergic to Brazil nuts, and they were kept out of his house. On Christmas Day he sat down to his dinner, ate it heartily, then said that he had eaten some Brazil nut and that in a few moments he would be violently ill. He was. His distracted wife insisted that there was not a Brazil in the house, let alone in the dinner. After Christmas, however, their confectioner told them he had used a small quantity of Brazil nut in his mince pies.

An odder case was that of the boy who had asthma from eating fish. He was cured by not eating fish. One day, however, he went fishing and accidentally sat on a dead minnow for several hours. Later, an urticarial rash came on his buttocks, exactly reproducing the shape of the minnow but about the size of a large trout.

At the same time as the doctor had scratched the grass pollen into my wrist, he had also given me three other skin tests as a result of what he had learned from his questioning. Their contents were house dust, to which I reacted slightly, and *Gladosporium* and *Alternaria*, two very common mould spores.

Trouble Came On Holiday

Here again, not all skin testing is so clear-cut as this. When the questioning reveals little, perhaps because of the patient's poor observation, the complexity of the case, or the gaps in current scientific data, the doctor may have to give twenty or more injections to help to find the allergen. At first, the substances are grouped—meat in one injection, animal hairs in another. Then, if one of the groups gives a reaction, its contents are injected separately. "We don't want the patient to kill off all the household pets to cure her allergy and then find her rabbit fur coat is to blame."

All the information that one man could supply to the allergist was that he had asthma every year when he went on holiday to the same hotel in Brighton. He could think of nothing unusual about the conditions there. The doctor injected a row of potential allergens into his arm, and a reaction came from feathers. Then the man remembered that at the hotel he slept on a feather bed. In a similar case, a woman

had hay fever every time her child's nurse had a night off. After questioning the woman, the doctor included orris root in the skin tests. It gave a reaction. The doctor then told her that the allergy came from bathing the baby. Orris root, sometimes used by cosmeticians, was in the talcum powder which she used.

At the other extreme was the cowman who told the allergist that he had been enduring asthma every week of the year except the one when he went on holiday. On his arm, injected cattle hair produced a giant weal.

Besides the main types of allergy, there are various associated types which occur less frequently. One, angio-neurotic oedema, causes swellings on the eyelids, lips, tongue, and sometimes the feet. In another, dermographia, the slightest pressure on the skin causes a weal. By light scratching, the victim can write his name on his own skin. There are also nose-bleeding and nose-running conditions, nettle-rash and variations on the main rashes.

No One Knows The Cause

"What causes some people to have an allergy and others not?" I asked the doctor.

"Strictly speaking, no one knows." He then asked me if any of my relatives had asthma, hay fever, stuffy noses, chronic catarrh, sneezing attacks, skin conditions, or migraine. I could think of two close relatives who had had catarrh and recurring rashes. "There," he said, "you have the only certain thing about the causes of allergy: in most cases it is hereditary."

"Will my children get hay fever?"

"Not necessarily. One may have asthma, the other may escape. Then their children may develop urticaria or migraine. They don't inherit a susceptibility to one substance, but a liability to become sensitive to anything. It's a constitutional weakness. Fortunately, a number of children grow out of their allergies."

In the cases in which the allergy is not inherited, advancing civilization, in the shape of products like chemical dyes, plastics and drugs, is generally to blame. The patients are said to have a strong sensitivity. Lipsticks, depilatories, nail varnish, hair-waving solutions, detergents, fertilizers, even nylons can cause such allergies. So can drugs like the sulphonamides, penicillin and aspirin—a few people, in fact, can react severely, even fatally, to aspirin.

May Start In Middle Age

It takes varying lengths of time to become sensitized to an allergen. It was seven years, for instance, before I had inhaled enough pollen to start the reaction. Some people do not meet their allergen until quite late in life. A middle-aged governess moved from a position on the south coast to one at an old house in the country. Previously, she had had no allergy. But after a few days in the new job she developed hay fever. She was allergic to the spores of a mould which was present in the house.

Once a person has been sensitized, other factors may be involved in the subsequent attacks. A man with asthma asked the doctor in the clinic why, if he was allergic to the feathers in his pillow, his attacks came only weekly or fortnightly. The doctor explained, after further questioning, that the man's sensitivity to the feather dust alone was not strong enough to start a reaction. Other factors—psychological, climatic, infectious, mechanical or even dietary—were needed. Thus, the man's feather allergens may have been helped from time to time by worry, a sudden change of temperature, a germ, excitement, soap flakes, smoke fumes, or just over-eating.

"Another mystery about allergy," said the doctor, "is the mechanics of the reaction. But you should know what has so far been discovered. When you breathe pollen grains they attack the cells in the mucous membrane up your nose. That is your particular shock tissue. With an asthmatic, his shock tissue is the mucous membrane of the lung; with the person who has allergic eczema it may be just under the skin.

"When they are attacked, the cells in this tissue give off a substance called histamine. This histamine makes the tiny blood vessels more permeable and fluid pours from them. And it is the fluid which sets up the rash or the irritation in and around the nose; or, with asthma, it swells the mucosa and tends to block the bronchioles of the lung. The histamine also causes spasm of the muscle round the bronchioles. When you saw the weal come up on your arm, you were seeing just what happens in your shock tissue."

Test in a hay-fever clinic. Allergy is a constitutional weakness, which is usually hereditary

Obvious Way To A Cure

Now the doctor began to talk about treatment. "I must tell you first," he said, "that the only certain and complete cure for allergy is the obvious one—avoid the allergen." To many allergics, this is so obvious and so simple that they have no need for medical treatment. For instance, I am also allergic (in the strict medical sense) to shell fish. I don't eat shell fish. But in many cases avoidance calls for a lot of thought and careful instructions from the doctor.

There is a spectacular example of the success of avoidance treatment. Every summer for nine years a miner suffered increasingly serious asthmatic attacks. They got so bad over the last three years that he had to go to hospital. Twice an infection developed on top of the asthma and nearly killed him. All this time the allergist at the hospital's clinic had been trying desperately to track down the allergen. He had suspected everything from pollen to bananas. He had questioned the man at length every year. But it was all in vain.

Then, by chance, the doctor got a reaction on the man's arm from a rare mould spore. For a time this puzzled him more than ever—until, in fact, he thought of taking air samples in a chicken coop at the man's home. Sure enough, that was where the mould, known as *Trichothecium*, was coming from. Next year the man was ordered to keep away from his chicken house. He has not had asthma since.

But, for many allergics avoidance is very difficult, and for many more it is impossible. To escape what is quite a local allergen would seriously affect the lives of the baker who became allergic to flour, and the girl who married

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The Indians came on, their lances flashing. Frantically, the captain raised his pistols and fired. One fell dead. The others swept down on him

A half-caste desired her—and so she alone survived the . . .

MASSACRE AT THE SPANISH FORT

by FRANK O'ROURKE

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

THE CAPTAIN AND HIS lieutenant stood close together in the twilight, as though getting tiny shreds of courage from each other, being very much alone and unwilling to admit the truth. The captain was thinking of his fort and his supplies—so many balls and so much powder, and food for his men. The lieutenant, younger and more hopeful of life, thought of leaving this alien land, returning to women and wine and good food.

They had completed the great work only three days ago, a labour of Hercules that appeared impossible in the beginning. To fill the hole and mine shaft with rock and granite cement was a monumental task, but it was finished. The final orders from Mexico City were carried out to the letter. The mine was sealed for ever, and the gold was in the very bottom of the mine.

It was quiet tonight in the fort, this September night of 1700. They missed the usual sounds that were an integral part of their lives—the bark of dogs, a rooster crowing, the faint slapping sound of hands shaping *tortillas* in the miners' huts against the lower wall. All these were gone for ever, the dogs and chickens and slapping hands, silenced earlier in the day by gun and knife and sword. The huts stood empty and smoke rose only from the cooking fire in the barracks, where their men prepared a final evening meal and spoke in hushed voices.

They had accomplished the order, as Spanish officers should, no matter the circumstance. They had maintained the mine far beyond man's endurance, and now they were giving it back to the land.

The captain moved restlessly and placed his hands on his hips, sniffing the wind that grew colder as night squeezed down upon the fort and the mountains. His sharp ears detected no sound.

"I have thought all day," the lieutenant said, "of all I shall do when we reach Mexico City."

The captain laughed. "Women and wine and a soft bed? It's a long road to the city. I have thought, too, of tomorrow and the days after. And of the Indians. They'll be around us when we march. And every night on the trail until we pass their land. How many do you think they are?"

"Who cares?" the lieutenant said. "A thousand, five thousand. They multiply like lice. They have only bows and lances. We can hold them off."

"And if they refuse to break?"

"Have they ever?" the lieutenant said confidently. "Feed them shot and cold steel. They turn and run."

"We have forty men," the captain said.

"Forty good men. And do not forget Vargas."

"A good man," the captain said. "A very reliable man. A fine blending of the bloods."

"Forty-one then."

"And you," the captain said gravely. "And myself. Well, they killed the pigs today for the big feast. I smell the result. It's time to eat."

"How long must I wait?" she asked, peering out of the wall. "You have food and water for a week," Vargas said sharply. "I will be back"

HE turned on his heel, a tall straight man enveloped with the dignity of his position, and walked to his quarters, with the lieutenant following at three paces, equally tall and straight. The captain's man came from the shadows beside the door.

"Food," the captain said brusquely. "Some of the pig, and that good bottle of wine."

"Yes, *mi capitán*."

The man moved silently across the dusty yard on bare, splayed feet. He stood a moment in the barracks door and watched the soldiers working around the fire. Unaccustomed hands had made the *tortillas* for tonight, split and cleaned the pigs, prepared the *frijoles*, and now cooked the meal.

The captain's man gathered his platter of food and hurried away to the captain's house. He had little heart for talk tonight, and he did not possess the confidence of the soldiers. He had spoken with Vargas in the middle of the day, and Vargas minced no words in telling the truth.

"You think we are leaving to come again?" Vargas had asked.

"Why not?" he said. "We are short of supplies. Everyone knows that. Supplies do not arrive until spring. We must go south for the winter."

"How many loads of gold were ready for passage?" Vargas asked. "You do not know? I'll tell you, little friend. Sixty! And you know where fifty loads are today?"

"I did not know how many," the captain's man said humbly, "but I know where they are."

AT the bottom of the deep hole dug straight down at the far extreme of the mine shaft, the gold lay, covered with rock and granite gravel mixed generously with antelope blood to form an unbreakable cement. Fifty feet down, maybe more. The shaft was full and for a week they had tumbled rocks and started slides over the mine entrance and into the ravine above the shaft, until every sight of the mine was hidden from view.

"And how many years have I been here?" Vargas asked softly. "Five. So I know of what I speak. Would they leave a king's fortune and go away if they were to return again, leave it so deep in the mine? No, we will not come back. And I doubt if we will see home. Now shut your foolish mouth and forget what I've told you. Guard yourself closely tonight and from this day on."

"The captain will protect me," the servant said.

Vargas chuckled dryly. "Because he spared you today, while murdering everyone else?"

"I was spared," the man said simply.

"You're a fool," Vargas said kindly. "Go with God."

The captain's man thought of these things and could not sleep for hours. He heard the sounds of laughter and song from the barracks, and wondered how the soldiers could be so happy after slaughtering all the miners and their women and the babies, even the pigs and dogs and chickens—everything that moved. How could the sergeant laugh when his woman, the beautiful Lupe, had not been excluded from the captain's sweeping edict?

There was good reason for killing, of course, with just so many horses to ride, so many burros to carry the packs. Also, they could move

"Faithful to the end, poor fool," he said. He plunged his sword down with swift, merciful aim

rapidly on the trail without the miners and women and babies. The captain's man was pleased that he alone had been spared in the killing. But then, the captain could never manage without him. He turned on his side and slept.

He slept through the rising, dropping wheel of the moon into early dawn; and when the captain came from his house and stood above him, he only turned in his sleep and did not wake. The captain murmured, "Faithful to the end, poor fool," and plunged his sword downward with swift, merciful aim. The captain's man experienced a blinding, shocking burst of pain, then felt no more, dying in his sleep on the hard-baked ground of the fort.

FROM a blanket beside the stable doorway, Vargas saw the act and shrugged. The fool had not listened.

Vargas slipped into the stable's blackness and wormed behind a stack of green, drying buffalo sides. He entered a tiny cavern formed by the thick adobe wall, the stall side and the hides and here removed the fat bricks from the stall side and exposed the narrow passage behind the stall.

He murmured, into the darkness, "Light the candle," and remained in the hole until fingers shuffled over hard earth and lit the stubby piece of candle. The sergeant's wife appeared to float and grow behind the flame, her round and beautiful face uplifted to the wide, broad face of Vargas. She sat cross-legged behind the candlelight, her loose, single-pieced shift stained a dusty brown from the adobe dust.

"Pedro," she whispered. "Does he know?"

"Nothing," Vargas said gently. "I told him I took you to the canyon rim and pushed you over. Such a tender-hearted man—he could not bear to go and look down."

"How long must I wait?" she said.

"Listen to me, Lupe," Vargas said sharply. "You are safe here. When we march out, the Indians will come into the fort, but you are safe here. You have food and water for a week. I will be back in that time."

"And then?"

"Who knows?" Vargas said softly. "I will decide. Now back in your nest, little rabbit. *Adios.*"

Vargas touched her face with one finger, pulled back, and refitted the bricks carefully into position. Crawling around the hides, he returned to his blanket and curled up for a last quick nap.

In the yard, the captain reached his house and called out a curt order. The lieutenant appeared, yawning.

The captain said, "Get them up. It's time to go."

In one hour's time, with the sun rising hot above the eastern mountains, the captain rode his fine black horse at the head of the column winding from the fort. His troop was well mounted on the pick of his horse herd, deployed carefully alongside the burros carrying the ten gold packs and ten loads of supplies. His lieutenant brought up the rear with the sergeant, and Vargas rode midway with the corporal.

The sergeant bawled at his men, cursing them pleasantly in his hoarse, deep voice. And behind them, smoke was lifting from within the walls in a thick, greasy funnel against the pale blue sky; the fort was burning and would burn until only the shell of adobe remained, to crumble and finally dissolve in the passing years of rain and wind.

They rode steadily through the day and saw no life in the canyon on the high western slopes flanking the trail; another day's march would bring them from the mountains on to the plain, where travel was swifter and the danger lessened.

The captain felt the silence keenly during that day, the pressure of unseen eyes, but he rode stiff and confident before his troops.

He called the halt half an hour before dusk, on a broad platean above the canyon, where he could form a square and see plainly on all sides. It was the best situation he could manage, and he relaxed with an old soldier's fatalism, knowing the attack would wait upon the dawn.

The lieutenant shared the evening meal with the captain and spoke of the city again. The men were quiet, once fed, and the sergeant inspected them carefully after their meal. Sentries were in position and a double guard was thrown round the horses and burros. The captain thought how foolish it was to guard the burros. The Indians cared nothing for the gold the burros carried; it was water and air to them, of no value in trading.

"We will be on the flats tomorrow," the lieutenant said. "You see, *mi capitán,* your fears were groundless."

"Go to sleep," the captain said. "Wait for tomorrow."

WHEN the camp was silent and the night still as drifting smoke, the captain rose from his blankets and walked softly among the sleeping men to the light of the dying fire. Vargas squatted there, chewing a *tortilla*, staring into the red embers. Big Vargas, the captain thought, a true *conquistador* even though of mixed blood. Vargas heard the captain and rose, bowing formally, holding the *tortilla* in one huge hand.

"Sit," the captain said, without formality. "You have been in this land five years. What do you think, Vargas?"

"Of tomorrow, *mi capitán?*" Vargas asked softly.

"Yes, of tomorrow."

"The truth, *mi capitán?*"

"Vargas, tonight of all nights, lies are for fools. I was never a fool. The truth from you, man!"

Vargas bent his shaggy head modestly. "We are doomed, *mi capitán.* They have five thousand warriors around us. Tomorrow morning it will be done."

The captain sighed deeply, almost a sound of relief. "I have felt the truth for a month, Vargas. Now listen closely, for I will not speak with you again."

The captain turned and glanced quickly at the sleeping forms, then hunched forward over the fire and motioned Vargas closer with one imperative finger. His voice dropped to the gentle softness just above a whisper. "I dispatched the letters of direction and the maps two months ago. You know that?"

"Yes, *mi capitán,*" Vargas said. "Everyone knows it."

"But do we know if they got through?" the captain said. "The maps and directions must

Continued on page 33

Visiting London Zoo, Bryan Dempster uses a baby crocodile to show the vulnerable spot behind the eyes. He has to shoot from a range of a few feet

I live by hunting crocodiles

by BRYAN DEMPSTER

By night, it means flirting with death—in daylight, the thrill of a victory over Nature's strangest partnership

WE LEARN HOW TO handle a rifle early in South Africa. I shot my first crocodile when I was eight. My father had taken me from our home in Natal on a hunting trip to the Zambesi. Big for my age, I was well able to manage my .303 Lee-Enfield. We were going to shoot crocs—ugly, armour-plated man-eaters; but first we had to shoot a hippopotamus for bait.

The hippos came out of the river to raid the natives' fields during the night. Thus, one moonlight night in May, we lay in wait at the edge of a field of maize. Everything was still, except for the sound of distant drums. Then Dad whispered: "Here they come!" I heard the sucking sound the fat hippos made in pulling their feet out of the mud.

Our two Zulu boys were behind us and I could hear the increased tempo of their breathing. The hippos lumbered closer, their damp, dark hides gleaming in the moonlight. "The big one on the left, boy," my father whispered. We were both lying down, our rifles at dead rest. Even at the age of eight I knew we had to be right the first time, for a wounded hippo will attack—and kill.

Baiting The River's Edge

"*Now*, Bryan," Dad said, and fired. My shot echoed his. The big bull took a couple of faltering steps. Then he sank slowly to the ground, while, in a confusion of ungainly fright, the rest of the herd crashed through the reeds and dived into the water. Now we had our bait.

Next day, our native boys split the carcass and pulled the halves to the edge of the river. That night we slept on the bank of the Zambesi, not more than twenty yards from the hippo bait. At two in the morning I was awakened by incredibly violent thrashing in the water. "There they are," Dad said. We crept slowly on hands and knees toward the bait—and then I sucked in my breath. Five yards from us, two large crocodiles had taken a grip on the hippo carcass with their teeth.

Crocodiles have no tongues, and their table manners are, to say the least, different. As we watched, they suddenly flipped their powerful tails up and around, twisting their whole bodies in a horizontal somersault in order to rip off a mouthful of meat. With another flip of their tails they propelled themselves back into the river, lifted their long snouts skyward, and swallowed. Their jaws snapped shut with a report as loud as that of a small-bore rifle. While the first two swallowed, another pair moved in to take their places at the carcass, as orderly as housewives in a queue.

Fascinated, we watched them for a full ten minutes, aware that few people had ever seen crocodiles feeding. Then we edged carefully down the bank right next to the carcass, unnoticed by the crocodiles, until I felt I could have reached forward and touched the nearest snout. I was shivering with excitement, thrilled beyond anything I had experienced before.

Dad had briefed me to fire just behind their eyes. "That explodes the brain and the crocodile dies instantly," he had explained. I took careful aim at one fifteen-foot croc while Dad held his rifle to within two feet of the other. We fired almost simultaneously. The two crocodiles slumped down, twitched their tails, and were still. The others disappeared in the murky water.

I was tremendously proud of that first crocodile. I have his teeth to this day. Of course, that was twenty years ago. Since then there has been a war; and I fought with the South African forces in Egypt and Italy. Demobbed, I was restless. I did not want to sit at a desk or be a farmer. I remembered nostalgically the crocodile hunting with Dad. And I wondered. . . .

Investigating the market, I learned I could get from £5 to £10—or more—for the yellowish skin of the crocodile's underbelly. The price would depend on size and quality. I felt sure I could make a living out of what was, to me, a

wonderfully exciting sport. I returned to the Zambesi, taking with me Joseph and Albaan, two Zulu boys of about my own age. I bought a dinghy and an outboard motor, and a new .303 rifle. And I became the first professional crocodile hunter on the Zambesi.

I began hunting a few miles above the Victoria Falls. This was a new part of the river to me. As we moved upstream, we saw crocodiles basking in the sun on sandbanks—three, four, sometimes a dozen at a time. Seeing the crocs in such abundance, I determined to shoot them by day instead of by night. But I reckoned without the crocodile's remarkable partner—the crocodile bird.

A species of plover, this bird moves about on stilt-like legs. He is the boon companion of the crocodile basking on shore during the day. The crocodile props his long upper jaw open so that the bird can hop nonchalantly in to pick at the bits of meat which have become stuck between the long, razor-sharp teeth. In return for his meals, the bird acts as a sentry. Thus the crocodile can doze off in the sun in perfect confidence, for the instant the bird hears a hunter approaching he flies screaming into the air, and the croc, awakening, slides into the protecting water of the river.

Birds Had Beaten Us

No other arrangement could suit the partners so well, but for a while it looked ruinous for me. I would manage to shoot one croc, after stalking for hours, but then the birds would remain alert for days and I could not get anywhere near them.

I cursed the crocodile bird and turned to night hunting. My Zulu boy, Joseph, shook his head sadly. "*N'kosaan*, the birds have beaten us," he said. *N'kosaan* means prince, and I felt anything but princelike.

That evening at seven I set off with Joseph and Albaan in the boat. It was already dark, with the sudden blackness of an African night. I had made up my mind to hunt from the boat, to meet the crocodile in his own domain. I wore a flashlight strapped to my head, and soon the light picked up red, satanically gleaming eyes in the water: they were the eyes of crocodiles.

I signalled Joseph to head into shallow water where there were several pairs of eyes shining like lighted cigars in the dark. We went full throttle into them. The palms of my hands began to sweat. Desperately I prayed: I hope the crocs don't move. . . . I hope Joseph doesn't make a mistake with the boat. . . . I hope Albaan is ready with the gaff. . . .

Then I had a crocodile full in the torch beam. To my relief, he didn't move an inch. At three yards I fired. The bow of the boat scraped over the croc, grinding him into the sand. The others had vanished into deeper water.

After that I got two or three crocodiles every night. Yet at the back of my mind I was still troubled because the watchfulness of the crocodile bird had defeated me by day.

Attacked By Giant Hippo

One night, about six weeks after I had started hunting, my two boys and I were heading upriver in the boat, a sixteen-foot wooden dinghy. We were keeping close to the shore in comparatively quiet, deep water when, without warning, the boat was hurled into the air, tossing us into the warm water of the Zambesi a yard or two from a giant rogue hippopotamus, the most dangerous creature in the river.

It was a bright African night. I saw the hippo hurl himself out of the water, his huge mouth wide open. I was petrified. He turned in mid-air, as nimble as a ballet dancer, and savagely attacked the boat, gouging great mouthfuls from it, tearing it apart. His cavern of a mouth seemed as large as the scoop of a giant power shovel and a hundred times more dangerous—which it was. He was in a furious frenzy and continued to attack the boat until it sank.

Though I was terrified, I did not dare to swim. It is an axiom on the Zambesi that one must never flounder or splash in the water—mainly because of the crocodiles, but in this case also because of the rogue hippo. I floated on my back, paddling very gently with my hands. I said nothing to the others. Then Albaan, usually so quiet, panicked. "*N'kosaan!*" he shouted. "Help me! I'm sinking! I can't swim!"

We Never Saw Him Again

The hippo turned from the wreckage of the boat. Suddenly he submerged, just as suddenly leaped out of the water again, blowing out air like compressed steam, churning the water. I was now ten yards from him. I prayed for Albaan to stop shouting. The rogue hippo turned to him, his mouth wide, lunged forward and snapped his jaws shut. Albaan's scream ceased. Then all was quiet. Paddling gently with our hands. Joseph and I drifted slowly away from the hippo, who was still jumping and submerging. We never saw Albaan again.

It was not until later that I realized that I had lost all my kit: my boat, my motor, my rifle.

At Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, I re-equipped with an aluminium dinghy and the other items I needed. This time, I had decided to hunt below Victoria Falls. I had heard there were more crocs in the stretch from Chirundu up to the Kariba Gorge than anywhere above the falls, and I wanted to see for myself.

I began my second try at professional hunting early in May, just at the end of the rainy season. Forty miles above the Chirundu Bridge, the Zambesi suddenly changes in character. The country beside the river gets more hilly. Then the earth and the river make up their minds and become the Kariba Gorge—high cliffs embracing a swift and narrow stream, then opening into a deeper, quieter pool. This pattern is repeated over and over again. After the straining outboard motor had fought its way against the more compressed current between the cliffs, we came very suddenly into the first pool. Joseph pointed incredulously.

Before us was a pool half a mile long. There were large, flat rocks near the water level at the banks, and tongues of white sand licking over the rocks. The air was humid and there was no wind: not a breath. On one of the tongues of sand thirty or forty giant crocodiles basked in the sun. I felt as if we were intruding on pre-history.

When they heard the put-put of my outboard motor, some of the crocs lifted their long old heads and looked at us coldly, arrogantly. Crocodile birds took to the air, screaming, and flew agitatedly back and forth over our moving boat. There were other groups of crocs on the banks of the pool—at least a hundred of them in full view.

Slowly, as we approached them, the big reptiles, so ungainly on land, slid into the water and became graceful. I had not seen a single crocodile in the pool less than sixteen feet long. They were man-eaters. They would be without fear because of their great age, and because there were so many of them. Hunting them would be more dangerous than anything I had tried before.

Sea Of Malevolent Eyes

That night at nine o'clock, Joseph, my gaff boy, and I laboured up through the first gorge again. I wore my head torch, and as we entered the pool I switched it on. Until then everything round us had been black with the blackness of night helped by the high cliffs looming over us. Now, in the beam of my torch, we faced a sea of eyes: red and malevolent, some still, some gliding on the water.

I signalled Joseph to steer close to the right bank of the river straight for a pair of eyes; but before we reached them, another pair suddenly appeared just in front of the boat. To avoid the danger of the crocodile's lashing tail, I fired before we ran into him. I got him, and the gaff boy quickly slid his hook into the huge body.

Now we were surrounded by crocodiles. I shot again and the gaff boy grabbed the second carcass by a foot. The glowing eyes were everywhere, moving in the water, but before I shot again we had to put the two we had on the bank. Then we went back into the sea of eyes. In half an hour, I had bagged eleven crocodiles, every one a monster. We were flirting with death every second, and the strain was beginning to tell. I was tired, but I could not quit. I knew I might never have such a chance again.

I went for the ones on the banks, signalling to Joseph to plough through those in the water; and we skated over them at full throttle, taking our chances. It came off. I shot twelve more crocs that night—a grand total of twenty-three, more than I had ever dreamed possible, more than I've ever had before or since. The largest was nearly twenty-four feet long.

Chance Was Worth Taking

Next afternoon I reconnoitred the opposite bank of the river. When I came to the bend, I crawled up to the steep bank and peered round it. I was delighted to see a gently sloping shore of rock and sand covered with crocodiles and their bird partners.

I noticed that the banks of the river at this point sloped up very gradually until they came to the base of an overhanging cliff. Suddenly I thought: if I could go to the base of the cliff at night and wait for daylight, the chances are the birds will not spot me. It was worth trying.

I went back and got two of the skinning boys and told them to accompany us in the boat that night when we came up to hunt. I pointed out three places at the base of the cliff and told them to scoop out three shallow trenches in the sand, forming a low mound in front of each trench.

At about 4 a.m. I finished my night's hunting. While it was still pitch dark, I carried my rifle into the first shallow trench the boys had dug for me at the base of the cliff. I sent the others away, and as I heard the receding sound of the outboard I knew I was absolutely alone in the gorge among the crocodiles.

At half-past eight I inched to the edge of the sandy mound and peered around. The crocs were beginning to crawl out of the river in ones and twos, and the birds were hopping impatiently about on the beach, waiting for their breakfasts. More and more crocs came out, until I counted nineteen basking on the sand. I had a theory and I was anxious to try it.

At Last I Had Won

Careful to make no sound, I aimed at the nearest crocodile—about a hundred yards away. His mouth was agape and a bird was standing in it, like a housewife at her front door. I aimed for the vital spot between the back of the croc's mouth and his eyes and fired. His mouth plopped shut, yet, somehow, the bird had hopped out first. The end of the crocodile's tail was twitching: he was dead.

At the report of my rifle, all the birds took to the air, screaming shrill curses, and the other crocs slid into the river. Slowly, I edged back into my trench and lit my pipe. When the screeching of the birds had stopped, I peeped out again: ten crocs had come out of the river and were basking. Others were half out of the water, wary and dripping. I gave them fifteen minutes to settle down. Then I shot another. My theory was working. At last I had beaten the birds.

I have hunted the big man-eaters of the Zambesi for five years now. I have had many thrills, more than one near escape from death. I have made money out of it, too. But nothing has meant as much to me as that victory over what surely must be one of the most remarkable partnerships in Nature: that of the man-eating crocodile and the small bird which picks his teeth and warns him of danger. THE END

DOWN YOUR GARDEN

with RICHARD DIMBLEBY

Strong support

To stake bushy plants, I push two bamboo canes firmly into the ground on each side of the plant, so that the tops are at the level where support is needed. I then bend two pieces of 16-gauge galvanized wire to enclose the plant, and push the ends (bent at right angles) into the tops of the bamboos. For single spikes of blooms, I need only one cane and one piece of

wire, which is formed into a circle round a milk bottle.—V. J. SINGLETON, Leyton, E.10.

Day and night border

When sowing night-scented stock—which closes its flowers during the day—I mix the seeds with Virginia stock. The two combine to make a border colourful by day and perfumed by night.—MRS. D. LAPWOOD, North Cheam.

Double-purpose hoeing

I save time by hoeing and sprinkling fertilizer in one operation. A two-pound syrup tin with a few holes punched in the bottom is strapped or clipped to the shaft of the hoe, and filled with fertilizer. As I hoe, a little of the fertilizer is shaken out of the tin, and deposited exactly where it is needed—just below the surface of the soil.—L. EASTERBROOK, Ellacombe, Torquay.

Readers are invited to send their own simple, original gardening hints to DOWN YOUR GARDEN, John Bull, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Every week, Richard Dimbleby will make a selection of the best, and John Bull will pay three guineas for each on publication. "Down Your Garden" hints cannot be returned unless they are accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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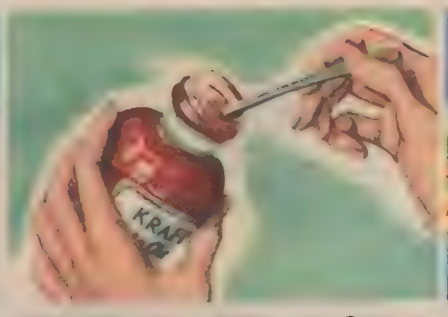

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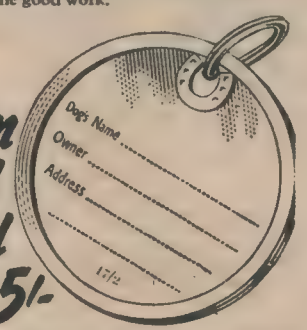

NATIONAL CANINE DEFENCE LEAGUE

Mr. R. Harvey Johns,
Secretary, Canine Defence Lucky Dog Club,
10 Seymour Street, London, W.1

REPORT ON MY BATTLE WITH THE SNEEZE

Continued from page 17

into the horse-breeding family and then reacted to horse dandruff.

To escape grass pollen is a hopeless task. It has been found five thousand feet above land, and twenty-five miles out to sea. Before the war the richer members of the German Hay Fever Victims Club did manage to miss the worst of the season by holding a jamboree on Heligoland, then the only known pollen-free place in Western Europe. But if I wanted to do likewise in this country now (and if I could afford it) I would have to perch on the small island of Skorry, better known as a bird sanctuary, off the south-west coast of Wales.

For me then—and for the other millions—the treatment is the next best thing to a cure: desensitization or drugs. "Desensitization," the doctor said, "is a series of injections of the allergen to encourage immunity. They are given once or twice a week from, in your case, January to the end of May. The strength of the injection is gradually increased, and you can expect a fifty to sixty per cent improvement the first year. But there is no guarantee. One man was cured of chronic asthma in two years. Another still has asthma—though it is much improved—after six years of injections."

Drugs Had A Bad Effect

I told the doctor of the treatment I had been having in recent years. After enduring the hay fever as a boy, I had first used nose drops and inhalants, without much relief. Then, four years ago, I heard of the antihistamine drugs and asked my doctor for them. Those that he had given me for the first three seasons had had a terrible effect. They wrecked my concentration and practically put me to sleep.

But the hay fever and the morning nose-running at other times of the year had got so bad by then that any preventive was a blessing. Last year, however, I had been given an antihistamine which had negligible side-effects, and hay fever and all had gone by mid-July. But I had heard from a chemist that the conversion to asthma is much more certain and much quicker if you take antihistamines. He said the drug decongests the nose but allows the pollen to penetrate deeply into the lung.

"That, I'm afraid, is one of several points of contention which still exist over allergy," the doctor said. "Some allergists disagree, for instance, that psychic, climatic and similar factors help to start allergic attacks. There is also a lot of discussion still going on about the histamine theory. And so on. Some allergists agree with your chemist. Others, including myself, don't. My advice is go on taking the antihistamine. If you develop any signs of a wheeze, go to your doctor. If there's no wheeze you're all right. One other thing: take care with the drugs, particularly if you do any driving. They may still have a slight effect."

Solving The Mysteries

To settle the contentious points, solve the mysteries and learn the full implications of allergy, research is carried out in clinics and laboratories, sponsored by a voluntary organization, the Asthma Research Council; doctors, chemists and botanists are engaged on it. To hay fever patients like me, the work of the botanists is of special interest.

They are investigating the behaviours of the thousands of varieties of pollen grains and mould spores found in the atmosphere over Britain. And they are coming up against problems like this: do mushroom spores cause hay fever or asthma—or any other allergy? At the height of the mushroom season there are up to 70,000 spores in every cubic metre of air. What are the effects of the thirty spores that go into our bodies with every breath?

While the research goes on, allergists are saying that more special clinics should be set up, to take the tedium of investigation and desensitization completely out of the family doctor's hands, and to make treatment easier and more encouraging for the patient.

To an allergic, like me, who has been to a clinic, all this is very encouraging. At last, an unpleasant complaint is getting the attention it deserves. THE END

BALLATER

The Queen's Holiday Village

A HUNDRED years ago Ballater was just another quiet hamlet in the Highlands. Then Queen Victoria, driving through the lovely winding valley of the River Dee, saw the village and fell in love with it.

Victoria had Balmoral Castle built nearby, and the Royal Family has since visited it regularly for its Highland holidays. Here, our present Queen spent many happy days of childhood, and in neighbouring Birkhall went honeymooning with the Duke of Edinburgh.

Ronald W. Clark has written a charming portrait of Ballater and of its people, whose work helps to make the Royal Family's holidays happy.

Among them are seventy-two year old shopkeeper Jock Harper, who once supplied Balmoral's guests with horses and now hires out bicycles; stationmaster Charles Milne, who greets the Queen when the Royal holiday train pulls in; the Rev. John Lamb, who preaches before the Royal Family at Crathie Church.

Ballater, the Royal holiday village by the River Dee

Illustrated with beautiful colour photographs, Ronald W. Clark's absorbing article will appear . . .

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

"You take a quart of strong beer, a measure of gin, a dozen eggs, half a pint of sherry, lemon, sugar and some nutmeg. Mix them well, then pat it on your face with a soft cloth"

I CAME BACK ALONE FROM NANGA PARBAT

Continued from page 9

mile-long snow banners off the mountain. After bellowing for five minutes from the top of Moraine Hill, Tenzing saw them, still at 17,500 feet. They were without loads. Bill and Jim climbed a hundred feet, waited a while, then disappeared.

December 1: Ajiba and Phu Tharkay say they saw them today pitch a new camp at 18,000 feet. The weather was clear and cold. They are certainly making a stout and persistent effort. . . .

During the next three days, though the weather remained fine and we could see their tent each day, there was no sign of any movement. There had been other fine days on which we had not seen them and at first I was not more than usually worried. But by December 4 the situation was alarming.

On December 5 a heavy storm covered the mountain. On the way back that day I thought over the possibilities. When we got back to camp I asked the Sherpas if they would help me if I decided to make a search. Tenzing and Ajiba promptly agreed. It was a brave gesture, for during the fortnight I had been back with them, I had often watched each of them by himself silently and apprehensively staring up at the mountain.

Tracks Were Wiped Out

December 6 was fine again and we hurried up to Moraine Hill. But not only was there no movement on the mountain, but the tent had disappeared. An avalanche had come off the north face on to their route just below the 18,000-feet camp and the ice-fall in the Rakhiot Glacier looked as if a bomb had exploded beneath it. It was unlikely that they had moved camp the previous day in the storm.

The next day I decided to go up after them and, while Tenzing was away on Moraine Hill, I spent the day sorting out the necessary equipment for a six-day trip.

Tenzing, Ajiba and I left camp early the following morning. We took one tent, the Primus, six days' food and the minimum of spare kit—two pairs of socks and a sweater. The two Sherpas were obviously frightened; and, with no skis and more snow, I myself had few illusions about the prospects. Once more, before we left, I wrote a letter. I handed it to the two remaining Sherpas to be posted if we did not return.

By midday we reached the glacier and roped up. There were eighteen inches more soft snow on Moraine Hill than there had been a week before. The going was tricky and we moved painfully slowly. Our previous tracks were non-existent. Crevasses, which had been open and obvious when we were last on the mountain, were now lightly covered with snow. I was in the lead and three times was thankful Tenzing was alert behind me as I crashed through into a crevasse with the forty-pound pack on top of me. Each time he held me steadily, and he could still muster a smile as I climbed out, winded and dishevelled. Over one twenty-foot-wide crevasse we crawled across a very doubtful snow bridge, in order to distribute the weight more evenly.

We did not have any of the special skis with us. There were originally only three pairs. Bill and Jim had two, and the third had been broken. These were a tremendous help in keeping more or less on top of the snow; wearing them, one seldom sank in more than knee deep in even the deepest soft snow.

It Looked Like The End

Gradually, the snow got softer and deeper until, for some hours, we were wading hip-deep, and by the time we reached the old site of Camp One just before dark it was up to our waists. It took a long six hours to get there. In a temperature well below zero, and with our frozen fingers sticking to the aluminium poles, it took some while to put up the tent.

Tenzing cooked and I admired his dexterity as in those cramped quarters he produced a quick, hot meal. We settled down for fourteen hours' sleep, the three of us with a good deal of kit, crammed inside the small tent. The squash at any rate kept us warm.

I was dozing off when a hand vigorously shook my shoulder and I was startled to hear Tenzing shouting: "Sahib! Sahib! *Burra* avalanche!"

It certainly looked as though this was the last act of the play. The noise was like that of an underground train coming straight for us. The two Sherpas were desperate. "Stay where you are," I shouted, and then held my breath. It was the closest I have ever been to an avalanche, and we later found blocks of ice the size of a house strewn over the glacier not a hundred yards away. The wind afterwards screamed through the tent, and when we went out to attend to the guy ropes, the tent was practically buried.

"*Thik hai?*" I said to Tenzing weakly. "Are you O.K.?" "*Thik hai*, Sahib," he answered, grinning nervously. The night passed slowly and I don't think we slept much.

As the grey dawn broke, I stirred and went outside. There were forty degrees of frost. I hurriedly got back into bed, and wondered how the Sherpas felt. I quite expected them to refuse to carry on. Certainly they were not enthusiastic, but after a cup of warm tea they seemed better and were prepared to move on up.

We were entering the section of the route lying close under the icecliffs of the north face. High above, gigantic

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slabs of snow and ice, laden with the weight of fresh falls, hung menacingly. I thought of the odds—and the stakes, too—and turned to Tenzing in one of the short rests to ask what he thought the chances were.

With a worried expression and between chattering teeth, he said: "I think we might reach them in three or four more days, provided that the snow is no worse higher up and so long as we remain as strong as we are now. But the avalanches are very dangerous, Sahib."

"What about frostbite?"

"Well, Sahib, I think we will get it today—certainly tomorrow. And by the time we get back I think we will lose our feet."

We moved on up. With an effort I forced myself to think clearly. Tenzing, I knew, was right. If the cold and snow became no worse, if we had some sleep, and if we were lucky with the avalanches, we could do it and reach them in three or four more days. By the time we got there, we would probably be useless for searching and digging, and without any doubt the Sherpas would be permanently injured and probably crippled.

Decision Was Very Hard

It was now thirteen days since Bill and Jim had last been seen and the chances of either being alive were very small. The decision was desperately hard. As these thoughts raced through my head, we were still moving up, and at length we came to another huge crevasse with the only bridge such a dubious affair that we would have to crawl one by one over it. That settled it. I decided we would return.

For many days afterwards I was haunted by the thought that we had not tried hard enough, and even now, more than two years later, I am not at ease.

To make absolutely certain that there was no possibility of Jim and Bill returning, I decided that we would wait on until December 26, a week after their supplies, had they been alive, were due to run out.

There was no longer any desperation or urgency now. There was nothing left we could do but sit and wait through interminable grey days of almost continual snowfall. Ten days passed in this way, and then, at last, the weather cleared.

On Christmas Day, the morning broke fine after another heavy fall of snow during the night. Immediately after breakfast we set off to go to the top of Moraine Hill—for the last time. I had spent the previous afternoon and evening making a cross out of two young pine trees. It was bound with tough guyrope and protected by a layer of candlewax.

I would have liked to engrave their names on it, but we had not the means to make a good job of it. Instead I printed "Jim Thornley" and "Bill Crace" on strips of plaster and fixed them as firmly as possible on each arm of the cross. Underneath, on the upright, I wrote "December, 1950." We carried this up with us.

Nothing Could Be Seen

At the top of the hill we cleared away the snow from the cairn which Ajiba and Phu Tharkay had built some days before, and fixed the cross in the middle of it. Someone fired two shots in the air, ostensibly to stir them if by any conceivable chance they should be alive, but I like to think they were funeral shots in their honour. We scanned for the last time the desolate wastes opposite. Nothing was visible. No tent. No tracks.

Today, that lonely cairn stands on Moraine Hill in memory of two gallant friends. From it the view extends northwards one hundred miles to Rakaposhi and, beyond, a vista of range upon range of high mountains. To the south it overlooks the scene of their last climb. Bill and Jim died doing the thing they most enjoyed, and doing it finely. They accepted a great natural challenge and threw all they had into the fight, a fight where success is not measured in terms of comfort, or security, or money: a challenge and a fight which the world will never understand. THE END

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

WHEN this photograph was taken I was at Polam Hall, Darlington. Even at that age—I was fourteen—I longed to go on the stage and entertain people. But my father, a die-hard Scot, was irrevocably set against this. To him the theatre was nothing more than a place of vice and sin. So I was sent to Polam, a Quaker school, to prepare for a career as a teacher or medical dispenser.

I was a shocking scholar, never having any liking for lessons apart from English, history and, of course, elocution.

Though I have no wish to excuse my lack of academic success, I must explain that I was a very weak child. Hardly a term passed without some illness.

Before I was sent to school I had slipped cartilages in both knees. This meant that I was forced to wear unwieldy steel supports on my legs for several years. The other children nicknamed me Dame Partlet, after the waddling hen in the fable of Reynard the Fox.

Somehow, I always managed to recuperate during the holidays. Mother would feed me up with eggs and milk, and soon improve my health. There was a concert hall near our home at Skegness and during the summer there were always pierrot shows on the sands. I would be almost overwhelmed by the feeling that I also should be on the rickety stage, making people laugh and cry.

At home I was always dressing up. My idea of heaven was to drape a glamorous scarf over my shoulders and treat the family to falsetto renderings of "If You Were The Only Boy In The World."

My three elder brothers had all refused to follow Daddy's career as a doctor. He was determined, therefore, to steer my thoughts round to becoming a dispenser, if not a fully qualified doctor.

Fortunately, my mother came to the rescue. When my headmistress advised my parents to send me to a dramatic school, mother suggested that I could specialize in elocution. My father eventually agreed, and I managed to enter the Old Vic as a student. It was the first step towards an acting career.

Today she is a popular TV and film-star. For her name, see page 35

TAKE IT FROM ME

Continued from page 13

in England only at lunchtime on Mondays. Consequently it had a very low listening figure at home and, when we brought the series to a close, nobody seemed to miss it.

One week, my agent managed to book me on a variety bill at the Golders Green Hippodrome. I was getting quite a few laughs, but felt I could do much better. On the Wednesday evening, after what I considered a particularly lukewarm reception, I returned to my dressing-room in a state of mild gloom. Suddenly the atmosphere was changed when the famous showmen George and Alfred Black came in and started to shower me with congratulations.

George said: "I thought you were terribly funny, Mr. Edwards. I was crying with laughter. Literally crying with laughter." I didn't know how to take this. Then Alfred, shorter and somewhat jollier in appearance than his brother, chimed in: "How would you like a part in a film we're making?"

This was too good to be true. "I'd love it," I said.

Jimmy's Film Test

The following week I went to the J. Arthur Rank studios at Highbury for an interview with John Croydon, who was in charge. "We have a comedy part for you, Mr. Edwards," he said, "which we think is ideally suited for you. Before we sign the contract, I would like you, in lieu of an official film test, to play a small part in a film we already have on the floor."

In this film I was the editor of a great national daily newspaper, and all I had to do was sit in my imposing office and have a conversation with my cartoonist on the telephone. There was, however, no comedy in the rôle, and I did not feel in character.

The scene was shot about half a dozen times. I didn't mind—my part had ample compensations. I sat back in my chair, phone in one hand and a glass of stout in the other. Since it was important that for each retake there should be precisely the same amount in the glass, the stout was constantly replenished. My spirits mounted as the director's face lengthened. As a result, my few moments of filming were left on the cutting-room floor. Nevertheless, I was told that, as a screen test, my work had served its purpose. I signed the contract for a frankly slapstick comedy called *Trouble In The Air*.

It was great fun making that film. As a B.B.C. commentator, I was supposed to visit an English village to broadcast a performance of handbell ringing from the village hall. At dinner with the local squire there came a moment when I was to have my face shoved into a large trifle, which was being carefully preserved in the refrigerator until the actual shooting.

When the time came for this shot, the entire studio staff gathered round with a kind of mild sadism to witness my ordeal. I enjoyed being the centre of attraction and was almost looking forward to the messy scene. I had steeled myself for all sorts of unpleasant sensations when my face met the trifle; stickiness, greasiness, even smelliness.

The director of the film, Charles Saunders, was a model of patience and forbearance. "Now, Jimmy," he said to me, "I want you, after your face is pushed into the trifle, to draw back very, very slowly. I want you to look straight into the camera and then, very deliberately, wipe the cream out of your eyes. Get it?"

"Got it," I said.

The cameras began to roll and Charles cried, "Action!" Lisa Lee biffed me on the back of the neck and my face met the trifle. I thought I had been prepared for every possible sensation—but I was not. That trifle, just out of the refrigerator, was freezing cold. The impact of this iciness on my face came as an agonizing shock, and I completely forgot Saunders's instructions. Sitting bolt upright, I ejaculated a word that I must have learned years before in Tom Tagg's stable yard.

Before the director could shout "Cut!" the whole studio collapsed with laughter. Then, patiently, Charles said, "Get the reserve trifle. All right, Jimmy, let's try again."

It was about this time that Frank Muir wrote a radio show for me—a non-audience show which he called *Ghastleigh Manor*. We did one trial recording—and that was the last we heard of it.

Meanwhile, Charles Maxwell had been conferring with Frank Muir and Denis Norden about a new show they were planning. When *Navy Mixture* had finished, Charles had said: "I'm anxious to find something for you and Joy. You make a good team."

While things were still in the early planning stage, Frank Muir told me what they had in mind. "We're aiming at a late-night show," he said, "not a top-liner."

"That's all right with me," I said.

"Denis Norden has been writing for Dick Bentley for some time," he went on. "You remember Bentley, don't you?" I recalled our Australian guest from *Navy Mixture*. "The idea now," Frank continued, "is to make you and Joy and Dick into a three-way team—a show with a very loose framework so that the format can be altered if it doesn't click at the beginning."

"It sounds like a very good idea," I said. "Count me in." I had nothing to lose, and, at the time, I had no notion that I might have a great deal to gain.

"We Will Go Ahead"

Frank and Denis then got together on the first script, and eventually a trial recording of *Take It From Here* was made, complete with orchestra and audience. We knew, of course, that it would not be broadcast; this is common practice with the B.B.C. when a new series is contemplated. We waited anxiously for the verdict from the B.B.C. planners. After my experience with *Ghastleigh Manor* I was not over-optimistic.

But word came at last. Charles Maxwell rang up and said: "We are to go ahead with a tentative series of six weeks. The opening is planned for five weeks from now."

My tonsils had been giving me trouble, so I seized this opportunity to enter a nursing home to have these infected and enlarged monstrosities removed. I knew that this operation could be unpleasant for an adult, but I was not ready for the anaesthetist's gloomy words a second or two before he plunged the needle into my arm. "My word," he said, "you're a plucky one at your age!"

When I awoke, I was thoroughly convinced—as I always am when anything goes wrong with me—that I was as good as a dead man. I lay moaning and coughing and swearing on the bed for several days, feeling as though I would never be able to broadcast again.

Excuse For A Party

I was allowed to go home after a week, but certainly could not contemplate any work until the first broadcast of the new series. The cost of the operation, and the ensuing enforced idleness, brought my reserves of cash down almost to nil.

So, from the practical point of view alone, it was most important to me that *Take It From Here* should be a success. The first broadcast, by a strange twist of fate, took place on my birthday, March 23, 1948.

Clearly, here was an excuse for a party. There was every reason to celebrate the start of the new show, the end of an illness, and my twenty-eighth birthday. I installed a pin of beer in the dining-room at home in Barnes, laid on all kinds of other supplies, and invited the cast and most of my friends to help me to mark the occasion.

Next morning, when the excitement died down and the headaches had taken possession, we looked round to see what impression our new show had made on the outside world. Reaction was almost nil. Nobody, it seemed, had even bothered to listen to the programme.

NEXT WEEK: Behind the scenes with the "Take It From Here" team

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KIT-E-KAT

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THE COP AND THE COPPERKNOB

Continued from page 11

pocket and looked annoyed and puzzled, too, as if he didn't know what to do.

There was a scene, the young man saying he hadn't done anything of the sort, and someone called a policeman.

We were all bundled into a taxi and taken round to the station. I couldn't seem to get policemen out of my hair.

At the station the young man, cool as you like, brought out the case and the lighter.

"It's a fair cop," he said. "But I'd like a word with you, Sergeant."

They went in a huddle together while the fat man and I waited. Then the sergeant came back with the young man and three or four constables.

"Would you mind signing your statement, sir?" he asked.

The fat man did so, and as he bent down they all pounced on him together. Everybody seemed suddenly to have gone stark, staring mad—including the fat man. I saw the gun in his hand almost as if it had sprouted out of his fingers. And without thinking about it, without really knowing what I was doing, I upped with the ruler on the desk and cracked him over the wrist and the bullet went way off. Then the young man hit the fat man a beauty, smack between the eyes and put him out.

"I've been after him for weeks," he said to the sergeant. "He's the Hatton Garden man. I came up against him on the tube tonight, but I knew he was armed and couldn't risk him shooting it out there, so I had to scheme to get him along here under his own steam."

He turned and looked at me austerely. "You were a bit slow on the uptake, weren't you?" he said. "Didn't you see me picking his pocket? You should know it's the duty of every civilian to report any unlawful act."

I'd got my mouth open to give him something to think about, when he broke in again. "You probably saved my life then," he said casually. "Come and have a cup of tea. I'll buy you one in the canteen."

WELL, it wasn't the most graceful invitation, but I was so staggered I went with him.

"I've just done four months in Holloway," I said, chattily, thinking he might like to talk a bit of shop.

"Oh," he said, and looked at me in a way I didn't like.

"I wasn't guilty," I said, fiercely.

"No," he said hurriedly, in the way people do when they'd sooner not argue.

That got my dander up, and, when we sat down, I told him of the affair.

"Oh, you're the identity girl," he said. "We've been warned you were out in case you try it on again."

My temper was mounting dangerously again. "Now listen," I said. "I've just told you how it happened. That was the truth. Will you get it into your thick head—I thundering well wasn't guilty."

"All right, pipe down, Copperknob," he said, and punched me gently under the chin in a way I liked.

"Do you ever get a holiday?" I asked him suddenly.

"I've fourteen days due to me now. Why?"

"You wouldn't have if it weren't for me," I pointed out. "They'd be going round with the empty helmet now, collecting for the wreath. Will you spend your fourteen days investigating my case?"

He looked at me strangely for a moment, but the idea seemed to intrigue him.

"Right," he said, sharp and sudden. "But I want full details. No lies. I can't wait now; meet me tomorrow evening."

"You meet *me*," I said, and gave him the address of the hostel.

He was round dead on time the following evening, and he'd even spruced himself up. We went out for a walk, and when we were through the park gates he said: "All right, let's have the hard-luck story."

"It's a success story, up to a point," I said. I told him everything. I was an orphan brought up by an aunt who died when I was fifteen. I went to work in a little business, and liked it, and made progress. After a while I was first assistant and then manageress, and when the owner—an old lady who liked me—retired, she'd passed the business over to me. I'd made enough money for this trip home which I'd always wanted. Then I told him about the day I landed and the whole incredible story.

"It's a great story," he said when I'd finished. "You're a nice girl and I'd never doubt you, but why not admit you're Nellie Biggs and let's go and have something to eat somewhere?"

I stopped. Somehow I didn't fly into a temper like I usually do. I was too hurt and sorry.

"Good night," I said. "If that's what you think of me, and Nellie Biggs is the sort of girl you're still prepared to take out, then I'm done with you."

I TURNED away then, quickly. I had to. There was a terrible itch in my palm to wipe the grin off his face. He caught my arm.

"Don't be such a spitfire," he said. "I had to try you out, just to see. But seriously, how about something to eat, Nellie?"

"How about a smack round the face," I said, and gave it him, hard. I was really sorry, though, the next second. My temper is like that.

"All right," he said, rubbing his cheek. "In the circumstances you can have that one on the house. But don't try it again. Your trouble is that that temper wasn't spanked out of you as a baby."

"It's too late now," I told him fiercely.

He looked for a moment as if he was going to try. And then he smiled. "Come and eat, Copperknob," he said.

His name was Detective-Sergeant John Wheeler. Over dinner we discussed it further. "The part that baffles me," I said, "is how Nellie Biggs could have known about me and my trip from Australia?"

"She could have been a maid or a hanger-on at the hotel."

"But why me?"

"Yes," he said, and looked at me. "Why you?"

He looked so thoughtful I didn't say anything.

"I'll make some further inquiries," he said, after a while. "There's a lot I need to know."

I didn't see him for a fortnight, and was worried. But he knew my address. I wasn't going to chase after him. Then suddenly he turned up, and we went for a walk again.

"I've been looking into matters," he said.

"Have you discovered anything?"

"Maybe," he said cryptically. "Now, don't lose your silly temper—I've been checking up on Janet O'Reilly in Australia. I want you to answer some questions."

And away we went, hammer and

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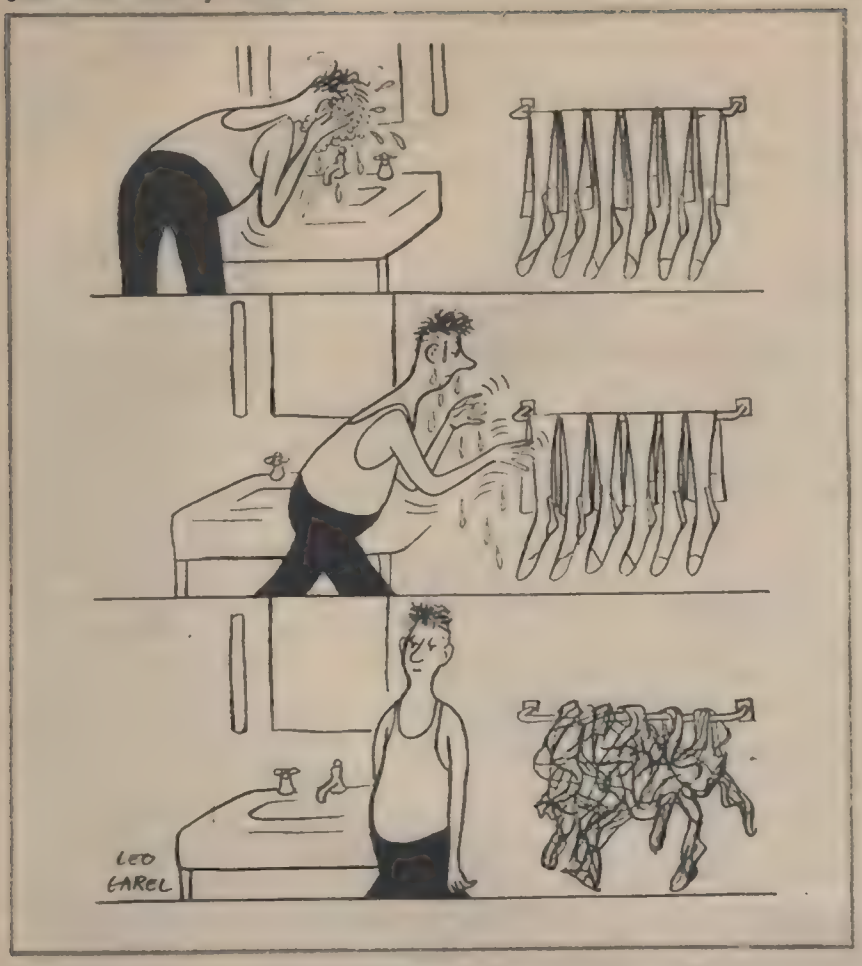
"Common sense is not so common," said Voltaire. You have been warned!

by ROFFE THOMPSON



tongs. Where was my shop? Who were my neighbours? What rent did I pay? Where was the counter? Could I sketch the fittings? Where was the block of flats I lived in? How many steps up to the front door? What were the names of the other tenants? Oh, a whole long string of them, just the sort of thing I ought to have asked that girl.

I shot them back as quickly as I could—although one or two stumped me, of course—and sat with my heart thumping.

He held out his hand. "Miss O'Reilly," he said, "I owe you an apology. Her Majesty owes you a free pardon. And heaven knows what you'll squeeze out of the government for compensation."

I took his hand. At first I didn't like him to see the tears in my eyes, but suddenly I put my head back and looked straight at him.

"Good old Copperknob," he said in a funny kind of voice and punched me gently under the jaw as he had done before.

"But what about this Nellie Biggs?" I asked, at length. "How did she know all those things about me?"

"They got them from you," he answered. "This steward chap was in it up to the eyes. I suppose you gossiped away to him nineteen to the dozen."

"We spent many pleasant evenings together," I said.

He snorted. "While he made notes of everything for future use! And then groomed that woman of his to look, talk and think as much like you as possible."

"But why should they go to all that trouble?" I said. "It isn't as though I'm rich or anything. I had a lot of nice clothes, of course, which she has gone off with. There was one evening dress——"

"Yes, yes," he said, impatiently. "Save that for the long winter evenings. What did you intend to do in England?"

"I was going on a coach tour first," I said wistfully. "Then, after I'd finished my job, I thought of going to Paris for a week or so and——"

"What job?" he asked.

"I was to do a job over here," I explained. "It had all been arranged before I left Australia. This business of mine was a specialist one; we repaired things—old china, old books and furniture. You have to have a feel for it. We did a lot of work for the Governor-General, who was so pleased he wrote his brother, who is the Duke of Hexham, somewhere up in the north."

"Hexham Castle," nodded John. "Yes, I know. Go on."

"It was arranged that I was to go to the castle for three months to renovate some of the books in the library there. I haven't dared to put in an appearance. I expect they've been wondering what has become of me."

"Why should they?" he said. "You've been there."

"You don't mean that that woman had the cheek——"

"She's probably quite an expert in that way herself," he nodded. "These things are planned backwards. First of all there's the person willing to buy and ask no questions, then the dealer who passes the word round, and then the crook to get his hands on the stuff. Was there anything of value in the library at Hexham, do you know?"

"Priceless, some of it," I said. "I was so excited because it was such top-notch work. A Chaucer, a first folio Shakespeare, a Breeches Bible, the prayer book Henry gave Anne Boleyn——"

"Would anybody know of this assignment of yours?"

"Anybody know?" I repeated. "Why, everybody! The local papers were full of it. I was written-up like a film star."

JOHN nodded. "So all they had to do was board the same boat, set you talking and get every detail out of you. Then, at this end, they briefed Nellie. What they intended to do with you eventually, I don't know, but it just fell out that your going into the store gave them a quick chance. She slipped in and did a bit of obvious shoplifting."

"But mightn't they have caught her right away?" I said.

He smiled. "That alone shows your innocence," he said. "They never take them in the shop; they can always argue they intended to pay. They wait until they take the first step off the premises. While she was wandering about in the powder-room and elsewhere she was safe. Once she'd planted the bag on you she could slip quietly out and leave you to it. She'd have dumped your bag, and they were all looking for a red-haired girl to come

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out with a bag. Your own bag may have been found somewhere on the premises. If you can give me a list of the contents that would be a further bit of evidence."

"Do you reckon we'll catch up with them at Hexham?" I said.

"We?" He lifted his eyebrows. "I didn't plan to take you. Of course, we shan't find them there. The job is finished."

We'd walked a complete circuit of the park by this time.

"There's one thing, my girl," he said. "You can count yourself lucky to be tucked away in a nice safe prison cell for those four months. If that odd chance hadn't cropped up they'd have had to think of some other way of getting rid of you, perhaps a bit more permanently."

I must have looked a little scared because he put an arm round me—in a friendly, protecting sort of way, of course.

WE went to Hexham and saw the Duke. He wouldn't credit us at first and took us into his library to show us his treasures safely housed.

John nodded.

"They came prepared with duplicates, of course," he said.

Experts were sent for, and sure enough everything was a fake. It hadn't stopped there. There were some good pictures about the place which had been switched, and quite a lot of the china and glass. They'd made a complete haul of everything worth while. . . .

How the police do these things I don't know, but John told me they were certain the stuff hadn't got abroad yet and that the pair of them were lying low, awaiting their chance to smuggle it out. All the police could do was to wait.

Then one day John told me the couple were planning to get away from Southampton in one of the Queens. He was going down to pick them up.

"You'd better take me," I said. "They're bound to be disguised, but I'd know her anywhere."

He looked at me. "You promise to behave, O'Reilly?" he said, sternly.

I promised.

We waited by the side of the gangway. There were a lot of plainclothes men about, but you couldn't see them. John and I were supposed to be taking a fond farewell of each other. I liked that bit and really threw myself into it.

He'd have missed them altogether, though, as I often tell him, if it hadn't been for me. The man was done up as an elderly gentleman, wrapped up to the chin and so infirm he could hardly crawl. She looked like some heavy middle-aged nurse, carrying his wraps and holding his arm.

I didn't even have to turn my head. I could feel the hair on my head bristling, and little waves of anger sweeping over me. I gave the word to John, and in a flash the pair was surrounded and the game was up.

We went back to the station and saw them brought in and charged.

He was servile, but she was as brazen as could be. She had on one of my best frocks under her coat, and just as they were walking off to the cells she turned and sneered at me and ripped it down the front.

I suppose she thought she was safe, surrounded by all those police, but I had her on the floor and had grabbed two handsful of her hair before any of them could stir. I gave her four months in Holloway in less than ten seconds.

While the others locked her, screaming with fright, in her cell, it was John who picked me up, still clawing and scratching like a wild cat, and gave me a good hard whack on the bottom to quieten me down. It was done so matter-of-fact and off-handed, it started me thinking. I'd deliberately kept off John until the affair had been cleared up, but there was no reason now why O'Reilly shouldn't come into her own.

When he brought back two cups of tea from the canteen, I was putting on the weeping act which I keep for special occasions. I just bend my head, shrinking away from the comforting arms, and being very brave about it.

"Why, Copperknob," he said. "What's the matter? It's all over now."

I choked.

"Nobody thinks any the worse of you," he said, earnestly. "You'll get a free pardon, the papers will be full of you. I think you're the pluckiest girl I've ever met."

If it wasn't the darnedest thing; it started me off crying in earnest. Real tears; but happy ones.

It took him quite a long time to comfort me—perhaps a bit longer than was strictly necessary. Once I'd got my red head planted firmly on his manly chest it seemed at home. John knew quite a lot about me, I thought, but he didn't know everything. And there was such a lot of time for him to find out. THE END

FORTUNE IS A WOMAN

Continued from page 14

did that." I felt pretty bad myself.

"I don't know how it could have happened."

"Never mind. Forget it. Look, the sun's coming out. Let's be honest tourists for one day and do something really dashing. Take a car out to Fontainebleau or somewhere."

She smiled and got up. "All right. Anything you say."

While she was finishing dressing, I picked up the ring and put it in my pocket, and we didn't mention it again that morning, although it was so carefully ignored that it got more and more in the way. Over lunch she said again: "I don't see how it can have happened."

"What does it matter? If we let it spoil our fun we're playing their game."

"Oh, yes . . . if it was only that. What I can't understand is how anyone—got it."

"I suppose sometimes he took it off?"

"Never, as far as I know."

"Who saw him—afterwards?"

"Only Victor. Mrs. Moreton wouldn't go in. I didn't, either."

"Maybe things like that are taken off the body before burial. But in that case they'd be returned to the next of kin, which was you, not his brother."

"Victor wouldn't do a thing like this. A barrister at the top of his profession. What has he to gain?"

"Mrs. Moreton—if she could have got it. But I can't somehow see her. . . ."

"In any case, they aren't the sort of people."

"I suppose it wouldn't be Clive Fisher?"

"Oh, *surely* not."

"Isn't he a man who could be catty in a womanish sort of way? This is so pointlessly vindictive."

After a while she said, sombrely: "That row Tracey and I had on the Saturday morning, it was about you. Did I tell you that?"

"Me. Why?"

"On the Monday before, when we came back so late from the ballet, he seemed to make nothing of it, feel no resentment or suspicion at our lateness. Did you think so?"

"None at all."

"Well, I suppose it had meant something to him. Or he chose to let it. I realize that now. He may have picked the quarrel deliberately to get me out of the house. He'd tried very hard to persuade me to go to Scarborough on the Friday without him. Anyway, we had a dreadful row about you. In the end, after we'd both said a good many hot-tempered things, he said he was going to consult you next time you came, to see about taking out a policy against adultery."

That other question that I'd wanted to ask before kept pushing itself to the front—yet I couldn't think how to put it in a casual way.

At last it came out, almost without my meaning it to.

"Did Victor say—did he mention if Tracey was badly burned?"

"I don't think he said. Obviously he wouldn't, to me. Why?"

"I was only wondering. Perhaps one of the salvage men got hold of the ring. . . ."

Fortunately the excuse seemed to satisfy her. But I wasn't satisfied or content any more. Once I'd almost told her of the breathing I'd imagined I'd heard in the house that night. Now I couldn't, not ever, because of what she might think. I realized that.

THAT night, we had supper at a little place near the rue Dauphine, in the artists' quarter on the Left Bank. The meal took four hours, and all the diners talked to each other, and shouted at each other and flirted with each other and pinched the waitresses; and people acted the fool and gave recitations in a variety of languages.

About twelve, I could see Sarah had had enough, and we managed to fight our way out. When we got out she was trembling, and I hailed a cab and we drove quickly home. In the bedroom she was still full of laughter at the antics of the people in the café, but the laughter was a bit too near tears for my liking, and when she got in bed she couldn't stop trembling.

I held her close to me. I was overwhelmed with a feeling of tenderness towards her. Her body was cold, as if she'd caught a chill; but I knew it wasn't that.

"Darling, don't. Try to relax. Lie quiet; you'll be all right in a minute."

I reached up with my free arm and plugged off the light, and we lay for a long time while her breathing steadied and deepened. I thought perhaps she'd gone to sleep; I couldn't see her face, and her hair lay in a cloud across the pillow. But after a long time she said:

"Breakdown in morale. Sorry."

"Nonsense. This morning was to blame. Talk about it, if you like. Get it out of your system."

"What should I talk about?"

"The ring, Tracey, his death, and your life with him—and who can have sent the ring: on and on till you fall asleep."

"I shan't fall asleep that way."

"Well, I'm not your doctor, but I should have thought it a good way. We've funked it today. Fatal. Face up. To begin with, tell me why it upset you so much."

"Isn't it obvious? Perhaps I've a sort of guilt complex."

"Guilt complex? What on earth do you mean?"

"When the ring came. I had a sense of guilt—I don't know what else to call it. Because since Tracey died there's been a *sort* of ease-up inside me that I haven't allowed myself to think was relief. Nor was it—exactly. Certainly not relief that he was dead, but a release from the kind of empty life that I was leading. . . . I think ever since I was little I've been wanting something I couldn't find. Not discontentedly—but to give point to being alive. Sometimes I've thought it was there—but it hasn't been, not really ever—always only the escape; the make-do, the second best, the failure. . . ."

I said: "You've taken a risk, marrying me."

"Why?"

"Well. . . ." I didn't know quite how to say what I wanted to say: that first she'd married a man who had become a victim of the postwar years; and now she'd married one with a hangover from the prewar years. "If you need a meaning to your life——"

She said: "I don't want a meaning just to my life. I want it to be to *our* lives. I don't see why that can't be."

"It can be. I only hope one thing."

"What?"

"That you won't ever be content with second best between us—at least. . . ." I was going to say "at least unless everything between us is bound to be second best for you." But on the brink I funked it.

She said: "When that thing came this morning. . . . You know those old melodramas that used to speak of 'a voice from the grave.' . . . Why does one *have* to be frightened?"

"Oh, darling, don't be that. The thing's over and done with. There's nothing more to come."

"Isn't there? How do we know?"

"Well, what can there be?"

She didn't answer, and I was glad.

SARAH and I flew back from Paris on the Saturday because we wanted Sunday free to look for somewhere to live. I wasn't going to see Sarah start life afresh in my horrible flat. I'd got a bit of my gratuity left and had saved something over the last two years—more accidentally than by design—and the few hundred pounds might help to pay a premium or something. She wanted me to have some of the money she'd legitimately inherited from Tracey, but I couldn't stomach that.

Sarah had wanted us to go back to her father's house, but I jibbed at this also. Even at the speed things had moved, it would take me a month or two to get used to being Dr. Darnley's son-in-law. So we collected her dog Trixie from Ponting Street and stayed at an hotel.

On the Monday I went down to the office. Michael was out, but the Old Man had one or two coy things to say and was really quite nice about it.

During the morning I rang Henry Dane. Dane, a particularly astute investigator I knew, was the only person besides Sarah in whom I had confided about the fire at Lowis Manor. I had told him what I knew about it—but without mentioning any names. We were to have met again, but then I went on my honeymoon and had to put him off. The whole

business had changed for me since I had seen him, and I wanted to have another talk with him and get his advice. We arranged to meet the following day and have lunch.

As I put down the phone, I heard Michael's voice in the outer office and waited for him to come in to see me. But he didn't, and I concluded they'd not told him I was back. After a bit I went into his office and found him using the phone. He raised his eyebrows at me, and I sat on a corner of his desk until he finished.

"Well, old boy, welcome back. Had a good time?"

I replied in the usual way, but his voice sounded rather odd, and after we'd talked for a minute or two I said: "Something the matter?"

"Matter? What could there be?"

"That's what I was asking."

He went and stood by the fireplace and hunched his shoulders till they looked squarer than ever. "No, I've been a bit worried about one or two jobs that have come up while you've been away. Did you manage on the currency all right?"

"Oh, not so badly. What are the jobs?"

"Oh, they're pretty well fixed now. Nothing very important really. How's . . . Sarah?"

This, too, was queer, this hedging, because nobody usually was more keen to share his problems than Michael. It was nearly a fault. However, I didn't say anything then.

At lunch he'd got an appointment, so I went to a local pub that specialized in business lunches and had it with three strangers. Charles Robinson—my best friend among the underwriters—was in the room at the other end, and he waved in a friendly way; but he didn't come across as he went out.

ALL afternoon I stayed in the office, picking up the threads. I had to ring several people, and at least one of them, a man called Carey, cut me short, saying he'd got an appointment. Perhaps I was expecting too much. Red carpet for returning newly-wed. I didn't see Michael again that day because he was on a case that took him out of London, and as I was anxious to get home I left fairly early.

Sarah was waiting for me in the foyer of the hotel, and sight of her threw out the minor doubts of the day. She'd found a flat, or thought she had, and we went that night and took it for three months. It was in Hallam Street and furnished, and was fairly expensive, but we reckoned that with Sarah earning as well as myself we could manage pretty well. Afterwards, we went to see her father. Meeting him was still a bit of an ordeal to me. I always felt as if my hands were too big, my collar crumpled and my aitches as undependable as a comedian's trousers.

The next morning, business took me with Michael to Lloyds. As it happened, it was Mr. Berkeley Reckitt—head of the firm of underwriters that had insured Lowis Manor—that we had to see, about a report I'd sent in just before I went away; and Michael was anxious to get the thing settled. Otherwise, I realized afterwards, he wouldn't have taken me.

Reckitt was a thin chap with prematurely white hair and a dry cough. He'd never been a favourite of mine, but his firm were our second-best friends so far as business was concerned.

Well, today he carried on a conversation with me, listening to what I had to say and putting the questions he wanted; but he never looked higher than my tie all through the interview. When it was all over and we were outside, I said: "What on earth was the matter with him?"

"Matter?" said Michael. "I don't know. How do you mean?"

"He looked as if I was something very decomposed that his dog had found."

Michael seemed to put on extra speed, shoving his way along. "I expect he's worried. They caught a packet over the fire in Singapore."

"Everybody's worried about something. But they don't need to take it out on me." I stopped, so that after a pace or two Michael had to stop, too.

"What *is* this, Michael? Is there something wrong that you don't want to tell me about?"

He frowned. You could see the indecision behind his scowl. "No, nothing. Come on. It's time I got back."

"Tell me what's the matter."

"Nothing. You're just imagining things."

"If you don't tell me I shall go back and ask Reckitt."

"A lot of good that will do you. None of it will do you any good, making mountains out of molehills." He hesitated again. Then, looking straight ahead, he said: "You're asking me to repeat an unsavoury rumour that nobody at all believes in."

"Some people have a peculiar way of showing it."

WE began to walk again. "Oh, it isn't that. But you know enough of the insurance world to know that it is worse than a village institute. A whisper starts—and in a few hours. . . . People don't believe what they hear. But it's like being told that so-and-so is a smallpox contact. You look at him a bit anxiously next time you see him to make sure you can see no spots. Then in a week or two you forget all about it."

"Well, tell me what particular disease I'm supposed to be suffering from."

We crossed the road, and Michael nearly plunged under a bus. He said: "You know the Lowis Manor fire. There's a rumour about that your car was seen outside Lowis Manor that night just before the fire started."

• • •

Sarah said to me. "What did *you* say?"

I said: "Tried to sound like a badly injured man. What else could I do?"

"What do you think Michael feels?"

"Oh, he believes me. It's not in his nature to give room to suspicion lightly. But he must remember that I did behave a bit peculiarly about the fire claim at Lowis."

"What will happen?"

"Nothing very much, I'm sure. If the story's accepted at all it will knock my good name for a bit. But there's no proof."

After a minute she said: "But this man who saw you get into the car. Might he have taken your number? Could he recognize you?"

"Maybe. But if so, why didn't the police follow it up?"

Sarah got up. "I wish. . . ." She didn't finish, and her face clouded.

"What do you wish?"

She looked at me thoughtfully. "It's a fine marriage settlement I brought you, isn't it?"

"Any trouble is my own fault for not being willing to wait for you. If the money had been paid back first, it would have taken the curse off the thing."

"How did you put off Henry Dane?"

"Said I'd been called out of town. I confess I do feel a bit fussed about that. I don't see how I can say anything to him now. We're *saddled* with the money, Sarah; unless you decide to give it to a dog's home. If the negotiations had begun with Berkeley Reckitt before this rumour broke out. . . . But we can't go now and say: 'Please, Mr. Reckitt, I know you're suspicious of us; may we give back the money before we are arrested for fraud.'"

She lit a cigarette. "What I can't understand is how the rumour has begun now. Surely, if anything was known it would have come out at the time, not now, five months after."

I got up, too. I was too jumpy and annoyed with myself to keep up any sort of pretence; and I told her about McDonald, Berkeley Reckitt's claims manager. "I imagined the night of the dinner that he was a bit cagey; but I was upset myself at the time—thinking you were in it—and anyway I didn't worry much what he thought."

"But why should he be suspicious—just because you made an inquiry?"

"I don't know what he thought. But I'd given him reason to dislike me and the thing may have rankled—not so much a suspicion as a hunch. Then when I suddenly married you. . . . Perhaps he thinks I not only set fire to the house, but made you a widow as well."

Her back was to me and she didn't turn. All I could see was the hand on the cigarette. She didn't speak.

I went on awkwardly: "What puzzles me is this rumour about the car, where it originated and what proof there is of it. That's the only practical thing we've got to worry about."

The next morning, I went into Michael's office and said: "I've been thinking all round this business. In fact, I've thought of nothing else since you told me. There's not a lot I can do unless I hear this story repeated myself."

"You know what my feeling is." He chewed the end of his pencil. "Ignore it. Carry on as if nothing has happened. I'm sorry I had to tell you. It's a thousand pities we had to see Reckitt yesterday, otherwise you'd not have noticed."

"Oh, yes, I should. I noticed a change in most people—even in you."

"Did you?" He sounded a bit startled. "Well, you can understand how I feel. It's not because I give the thing a minute's credence. If I showed any sign of worry it was because of its existence. You know what our job is like: we don't carry a stock or a large capital. Our asset is reputation."

"And you think——"

"No, I don't. I think it'll blow over. What you should try to do is keep out of people's way as much as possible for the next few weeks. And when you do meet them, however they behave, act just as if nothing had happened. Particularly with Reckitt, since it was his firm. . . . The vast majority of people—if they hear it at all—will say: 'What? Branwell? Oh, nonsense; he's far too straightforward and decent a fellow for that.' And so will Reckitt, if he takes time to think it over."

I said: "Your father doesn't know about this yet?"

"I don't think so. I certainly haven't told him."

"Then keep it from him if you can, will you? I shouldn't want to be the cause of a lot of unnecessary worry."

Michael looked at me. "All right, I'll do my best."

I left then and went out on a job in Hammersmith. Of course it wasn't entirely that I wanted to save the Old Man the worry. I wanted to be saved the unpleasant job of lying to another man I respected.

The job at Hammersmith was to do with some fur robberies, and I plunged into it, trying to forget all the rest. I soon suspected that there was an attempt being made by the furrier, a man called Collandi, to get more compensation for his furs than he was entitled to, and I spent most of the day on it. There was some trouble over the books, which he first said had been stolen and then said were at his accountants. He promised to produce them on the following day.

I thought: this is right out of my line of country; set a thief to catch a thief.

NEXT day no books were forthcoming, but an assessor called Abel had been engaged by Collandi to act for him. Abel was a type I didn't like, as sharp as a needle and a good deal tougher. But by now I had made inquiries and knew that Collandi's reputation was about as shaky as it could be, and I said I wasn't recommending any settlement until the books were produced.

I was a bit late home that night, and Sarah wasn't in the foyer as she had been before. I found her upstairs.

Her face always changed, lit up when she saw me. But I could tell as soon as I kissed her that there was something wrong.

"You're late," she said. "Anything new?"

"No, thank God. I've hardly seen Michael, and the other people I've had dealings with behaved normally enough. Hallo, old girl. . . ." I bent to return Trixie's welcome. "Is she settling down?"

"Grudgingly, yes. She's country bred, though, and doesn't approve of the town."

After a minute I said: "Was she really your dog, or was she Tracey's?"

"Mine. Tracey gave her to me as a birthday present. But I always used to feel—in a queer way—that her first allegiance was to him. . . ."

As she spoke, Sarah had gone to a cupboard and taken out a couple of bottles. I watched her carefully. I said: "I can't help feeling that Trixie isn't the worst thing on your mind."

She turned and gave me a very searching look. "Am I such a give-away?"

"Pretty well. Yes."

"It wouldn't be any use trying to hide something from you, would it?"

"Not much."

"No. . . ." She turned back to the bottles. "Well, would you like a gin and French or a gin and French? We

"Well, I didn't actually come right out and ask him, but I did kind of sound him out by alluding to the idea of a rise indirectly, in a sort of joking way, but he didn't seem very receptive, so naturally I didn't push it . . ."

have every known variety." Her voice was quavering a bit.

"What is it, Sarah? Has—something else happened?"

She said in the same queer voice: "I got home at five. There was a man waiting for me in the lounge. Said he was a solicitor, called Mr. Jerome. Said he had business with me, so I ordered tea and we sat talking among the old ladies, sipping tea and—talking blackmail. . . ."

"Blackmail?"

She pulled some wrapping paper off the vermouth bottle, screwed it carefully into a ball.

"Mr. Jerome said he was acting for his client—wouldn't give him a name. His client, he said, was interested in the fate of certain monies—Mr. Jerome had the usual lovely way of putting things—of certain monies that had come to me as a result of the unfortunate fire in which my unfortunate husband met his death. Mr. Jerome said the fire was supposed to have happened accidentally; but of course 'among friends' that story just wouldn't wash. 'Among friends' one knew very well what it was all about. Twenty-eight thousand pounds after all was quite a fair sum of money, and his client realized I would like to keep it all. Even fourteen thousand——"

"Don't tell it me that way," I said. "I don't like it. What did he want and what did you say?"

SARAH dropped the wrapping into a wastepaper basket. "He wanted fourteen thousand to keep quiet. Like someone saying that an investment in wool was a good thing. Stirring his tea and fiddling with his spectacles. And the old lady on the next settee complaining that her toast was burnt. He said he wouldn't have anything to eat because he was a diabetic. He said he had proof of the swindle, and if the police got it I should end in jail. He said the thing had been in preparation by Tracey for twelve months, and his client could show that it had, and his client could prove that I must have been in it as well. He said that this was a nice hotel and rather expensive, he supposed. He said that his client didn't want to be hard on me and that he'd undertaken to leave me in 'undisturbed enjoyment' of the other half. . . . Mr. Jerome went in about half an hour, after thanking me very courteously for the tea. . . ."

"What did you say?"

"I said I didn't know what he was talking about. I said I couldn't believe there was a word of truth in what he said. In any case I'd have to have time to think it over."

"Good girl."

"I suggested he might come to the flat next Sunday, but he wouldn't do that. He said he'd call back here—tonight."

I said: "Did he mention me?"

"No."

"Did he give the impression that *we* had better pay the money, or that you had?"

"That I had."

"What time did he say he'd be back?"

"About nine." She stared at her glass.

"Can you eat any dinner?"

"Not much."

"Well, let's try. Perhaps this isn't such a bad thing after all. At least it's something we can fight. Perhaps we shall have the answer to quite a lot of our questions before tomorrow."

We toyed with the meal and were back upstairs again before 8.30. Sarah said Mr. Jerome had been quite definite that they must meet again in the public lounge; so I let her go down and then followed in a few minutes and took a seat in the extreme opposite corner and tried to read *Country Life*.

The lounge was fairly empty at first, but it filled up towards nine, and I had quite a job to see Sarah's dark curly head across all the other coiffures that sprouted between.

Quarter past nine came, and every time the revolving doors began to move I thought: this is it. Although Sarah had given me a fairly good idea, I saw him paunchy and short-sighted, black-haired and suave. At half past nine, Sarah got up and came towards me. She looked white and tired.

"Something's put him off. He may have seen you and thought it was a trap."

"Perhaps he's just unpunctual. Give him another fifteen minutes."

She said: "You stay here. I'll ask at the desk and then walk round the hotel."

I AGREED to that and sat down again. *Country Life* was full of big places for sale—other Lowis Manors—whose owners were able to take the more conventional course. I chucked it down and put my hand in my pocket and took out Tracey's ring and looked at it. So far I'd carried it with me all the time, though I never let Sarah see it again. I felt pretty much on edge, and wondered what I should do if I had to give up the insurance game.

With Sarah as my wife, the idea of starting absolutely afresh, perhaps in New Zealand, had a new and exciting appeal. . . .

A page boy was coming across the lounge towards me followed by a man in a dirty mackintosh.

"Mr. Branwell, sir? Gentleman to see you."

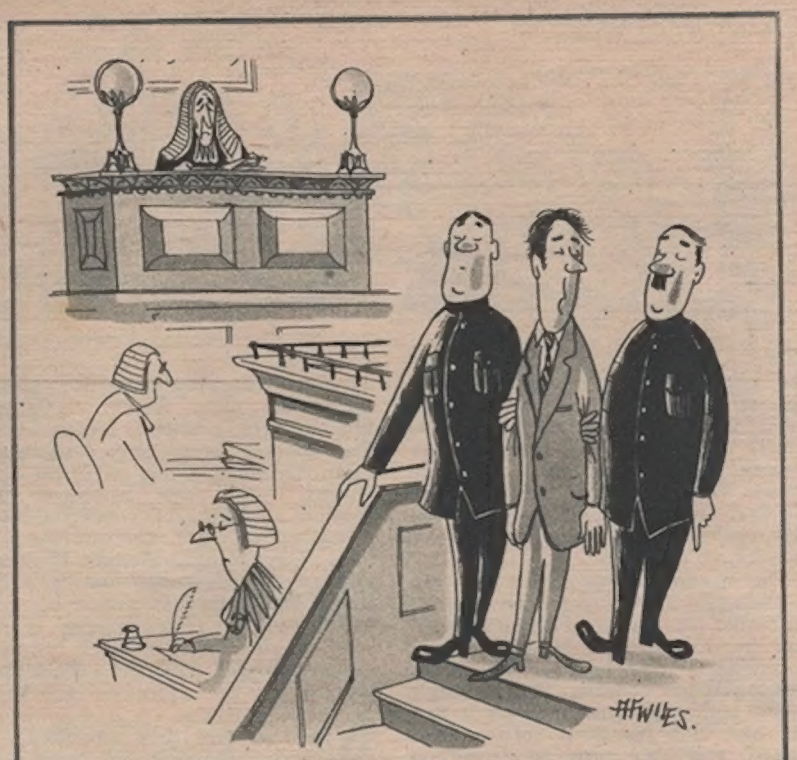
The man was a tall chap, with a thin, rather ugly face and prominent teeth. He uncovered them at me as the page boy turned away, and said:

"Mr. *Oliver* Branwell?"

"Yes." I got up. "Are you Mr. Jerome?"

He looked at me with a slight frown. "No, sir. I'm afraid not. My name is Barnes. Detective-Sergeant Barnes. Is there anywhere do you think we could go for a little private chat?"

To be continued next week



"This is going to hit the Income Tax people pretty hard"

MASSACRE AT THE SPANISH FORT

Continued from page 20

reach the authorities, the Church if none else. Vargas, you can describe faithfully the location of the mine, can you not?"

"Yes, *mi capitán*."

"Good," the captain said. "When I return to my bed, I order you to find the corporal. He is to obey my orders without question. The two of you will make up a pack of supplies at once. Then be on your way."

"But——"

"Silence," the captain said gently. "I give you a chance for life, you fool. Get out of camp, make for the south. If you win through, go at once to the authorities, describe to them the location of the mine while your memory is clear and fresh. Here." The captain thrust two letters into Vargas's hand. "One for my wife, one for my general. Attend you, Vargas. Deliver both to the authorities, who will forward them safely. Now go."

Vargas accepted the letters and looked into the captain's eyes. He murmured: "But why, *mi capitán*? Why me, of all around us?"

The captain smiled frostily. "Because you are a great rogue, Vargas, and I have always admired you. Who secured the largest meal, day after day? Who gained the confidence of the sergeant's wife when no one knew but the woman and myself? Who could live five years in that hellhole, taking one small pinch of gold dust each day, so that tonight you wear the pouch beneath that loose shirt against your hairy hide? And yet, who has been braver and more faithful to me? For all these reasons, Vargas, you deserve a chance. Now go."

Vargas bent his head and said fervently: "I swear by my mother, *mi capitán*, if I win free, the letters will be delivered safely."

"Go with God," the captain said, "and hurry, man."

The captain rose and walked to his blankets. It was early night and he had a considerable time remaining to wait. There was no need for concealment now; they were watching from all sides, and a man might well enjoy himself. The captain filled his best pipe, lighted it with the brand he had carried from the fire, and sat back on his elbows, puffing luxuriously. Vargas and the corporal had a chance to escape, for Vargas knew this land like the Indians. Fools that Vargas and the corporal were, packing now, preparing to slip away, thanking their captain and promising to burn a thousand candles in his sweet memory, should their lives be spared. The captain smiled enigmatically to himself.

TWO months ago, in preparing maps and letters of direction for the authorities, the captain had found himself rebelling against the stupid fools whose greed killed good men and placed officers in sinkholes at the earth's very ends. He could read between the lines of the last dispatches. Did they think him blind to fate and circumstance? They knew the Indians could no longer be checked; they knew the mine was doomed; and they sent a curt order demanding maps and directions, immediately, under strong guard of ten men. They ordered him to seal the mine, conceal it from all eyes, and abandon the fort within two months. Transport all gold he could safely carry, burn everything, silence excess tongues and eyes—this last in a small note written privately by his general—and leave the mine until they should return.

Return! The captain had laughed at that greedy, pigheaded thought. There was no return to this far place. They had milked it for almost fifty years, and now the cow was dry. Return? Not with the mother country blind to the wrongs of Mexico, the cruelty visited upon its people by their viceroys, their soldiers, their Church. At last the captain had the chance to even the score.

His maps were magnificent, his letters were marvels of clarity. He wrote explicit directions for finding the mine, all landmarks and compass points, Jacob's staff — everything necessary. He made a special three-day tour with twenty men to the big spring on the east slope of the mountains. He buried four cannon balls filled with nuggets and dust around that spring, explaining this in his letters. By placing one cannon ball in clear view above the spring, he provided a welcoming mark for the search party, water and shelter and a point of departure.

He told of the bare spots on the west wall of Palo Duro Canyon, the great canyon that housed the mine, and the degrees to be taken, the paces to be stepped, the ravine that must be cleared to show the mine. He did not explain how the mine was settled, nor did he tell about the fault on the upper rim from which point a man could drive a small new shaft downward on an angle and recover the gold with a minimum of labour.

But he had carried out his orders swiftly, signed his name and rank, and sent the dispatch case off with ten good men, and the messengers, as specified in the order. Ten good men, so badly needed, gone for ever.

Well, he would have the last laugh, perhaps in hell or heaven, wherever his shade would go. The maps and the letters would lead them to a ravine choked with rocks and slides, sprinkled with old bones and pieces of metal and leather, all signs of much labour and living, but the ravine was a day's ride south of the mine itself. They might dig and sweat and curse, to no avail. A day's ride north was the true mine, and every man rode his own distance in one day.

The captain laughed softly against his pipe stem, thinking of the Church and viceroy slavering at the mouth, dreaming of fifty jackloads waiting in the mine. They would plot and plan to recover the gold and use it for their own expensive needs. With never a thought for the dead captain who had served so faithfully and well, whose bones lay bleached and spread carelessly on the wide, silent land.

Vargas's story would only make the maps and letters loom larger in truth. Vargas might give directions, but they would be uncertain, as would be the corporal's. Nevertheless, their stories would lend complete authenticity to the captain's maps, to his sagacity in dispatching them when all was lost.

Yes, the authorities would continue to lust for gold, and search until they, too, were dead and gone; for no one would find that gold again unless—unless it was their good captain.

The captain had waited sufficient time for Vargas and the corporal to creep from the camp. He sat up and packed more tobacco upon the coal in his pipe bowl, and watched the sleeping men.

An hour later, he heard the sergeant changing guard, the relief going out and the first watch returning to bed, settling with tired grunts, instantly asleep. All was still and the moon was far down, pale and sick in the blue-grey sky.

The captain lay back, flat upon his blankets, and rolled from that hard bed to the ground. He moulded the blankets into the shape of a sleeping

man, then began his often-planned movements.

He divested himself of his uniform, his armour, his weapons, the sword and short dagger and helmet, and placed them beside the bed. He opened the big pack and slipped quietly into the loose trousers and shirt, the heavy jacket, the strong sandals with wraps that wound high above the ankles for protection and strength. He removed the smaller, tightly filled pack and the water bag.

He had food for a long march by drawing his belt and living sparingly on the corn and dried meat, the packages of *frijoles* and *tortillas*. Also in the pack was a plump pouch of gold, and papers which gave the captain a new identity, and powder and ball for the two pistols he hung carefully at his belt.

The captain jerked a cap over his black hair and slipped a long knife into a sheath beneath his left arm. Now, he thought, it was time to go.

He crawled from the bed, towards the west, remembering distinctly the picture of the surrounding land, locating the shallow ditch that wound away from the camp towards the high western slopes. He crawled silently until he no longer heard the sound of moving horses and sleeping men. The captain moved with infinite caution, one length forward, a pause to listen and look, then another length. The hours passed and the sky attained a softer colour in the east. The captain was far up the ditch, into a deeper ravine, an earth fault, and finally directly below the escarpment that rose up from the plateau.

He paused for a long moment, holding his breath, listening to the night. On his right came the sound of bare feet on rock, feet moving slowly towards the camp along the wider, deeper ravine. The captain smiled. He judged correctly the evening before; he was under the bank and not adjacent to the large ravines coming down on to the plateau. The Indians would use the larger ravines, flow like water down them, closing and enfolding the camp.

The captain waited until all sound was dissipated, then crept forward in a tiny water-worn crevice, pausing each foot of the way to listen and rest, reaching the top only in time, just before the grey light streaked the sky. He pulled his body over the edge of the low bank and swung round in the crevice, facing east, looking down upon the camp.

The crevice was the depth of three bodies placed flat, concealing him in

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM

the earth. His was the great gamble against eternity, for he was not concealed from above, but the gamble was worth the reward. If they did not happen here during and after the attack, he could remain in the crevice all day, travel at night, and eventually reach the river and pass into safer country. And then. . . .

The captain had thought it out very carefully during the past two months. He would die officially with all his men and months later a stranger would appear in the city, bearded and brown, wearing rough clothing. The stranger would submerge himself, begin a new life and bide his time until a year passed, and then plan an expedition to the north. There were men who waited for such chances; he would fill his ranks from their breed. And should he win through to the mine, a fortune waited. Then, with his share, a secret journey to the south, a passage bought carefully, and the long voyage to a new life either in Italy or in France; or, if such was impossible, north to California. A gamble, true, but better than certain death.

The captain dug himself deeply into the crevice, placed the water bag before his face and rested his chin against crossed hands. He was some five hundred paces from the camp below, and now he heard the faint voice of the sergeant rousing the men. He saw them moving to the horses, preparing the hasty meal. He heard the lieutenant's voice, sharp and tiny across space, calling for the captain, calling again and again. He could see them now, plainly enough, small figures at this distance, but clear in detail—legs and arms and bodies, faces featureless and pale.

The lieutenant ran to the captain's bed, bent over the blankets, then turned away and raised his sword that glittered in the first sunray. And all around the camp the Indians rose and moved forward.

The captain smothered a gasp of wonder, of surprise; below him, spread across the open ground, were the Indians. His practised eye estimated their number as all of five thousand. From the north, filling on to the open ground, came their horsemen, five hundred at least. That was the irony of nature and fate, thought the captain. The Spaniard brought the horse and awed the world; and now the Indian had taken the horse for his own, had become a rider superior to the Spaniard in every way. The invader's greatest weapon was now turned upon him.

What a scene they presented, the captain thought; what a carnival of colour and savagery and death. He felt a clinical interest now in his lieutenant's reaction to all this. He wanted to say, "What of the women now, of the city, the wine, the soft bed? What of them, *mi teniente?*"

The lieutenant was shouting orders, forming his men into a tight square, facing the enemy on three strong sides and one lesser—that towards the canyon rim where the ranks of Indians were thinner.

The lieutenant strode bravely round his square, waving his sword, calm and deliberate; and, no doubt, cursing the captain from his very soul's depth for running away. And then the Indians moved inwards like brown sand pouring over the earth, unhurried, restraining their rush for the final command of their chief.

What was it the lieutenant had said about fighting the savages? "*Do not fear them. We have the guns and the swords and the strong lances. We know how to fight. Give them a round of shot; they will break and flee in disorder.*" Ah, the lieutenant's brave words spoken two nights ago!

The captain searched along the circle of waiting Indians and found his man, the chief, astride a spotted pony. The chief lifted one arm, holding a long lance aflutter with feathers and bits of coloured cloth, held it erect and stiff for a long, breathless moment, then dropped it with a final, abrupt sweep. Answer him, *señor teniente,* the captain thought. Show him your strong right arm.

He saw the lieutenant lift his fine sword, that emblem of power and justice, and bring it downwards in a flourish and sweep. The guns puffed smoke and their reports to the captain's ears—puny sounds suddenly drowned beneath the thunder of hoofs and running feet.

Too soon, you fool, the captain thought. Too soon.

The captain watched the brown tide move inwards, saw the north and south flanks split, leaving an opening. The horsemen, led by their chief, came down from the north in a wild, curving line that thrilled the captain's heart.

The guns got off another ragged volley and the sergeant screamed and the lances went out and presented their sharp, strong front to the Indians. The horsemen thundered down, on and into the lances, never stopping, and the brown tide closed upon the other flanks. The captain saw the horses and riders impaled upon the lances, building up a human wall over which the others came in unending streams. There followed a flurry of wild fighting while swords flashed in the sun and the brown wave swept on and over the camp.

The captain watched, breathless, and saw the lieutenant and the sergeant, back to back, fighting gallantly, then disappear like two futile grains of sand beneath the sea.

It was over and done with, and the rear ranks hadn't yet reached the camp.

The captain watched them mutilate the bodies, strip the clothing and armour and equipment, squabble over the wealth of guns and lances and supplies. Finally, order was restored by the chief. The horses and burros were led away to the north, and soon the

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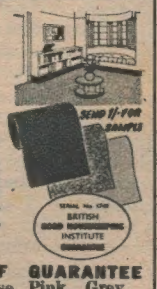

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camp was deserted. All that remained was the churned, stained earth and the white bodies scattered carelessly about the black splotch of the dead fire.

The captain closed his eyes and prayed a moment for their souls; and then watched the great army of Indians move away, following their shock troops, their horsemen, the cavalry of the plains.

It was done, over and finished, and the captain lived. He was dry-lipped now, in need of a drink, but disciplined his mind with the order to wait until the sunset was overhead. Water must be treasured, and food. He relaxed against the hard ground, and heard a slight sound behind him. He forgot the water, saw the future shrivel and die, as he rolled on his side and looked up to the rear.

They stood in a half circle, six of them, lances up, faces without expression. The captain met their gaze and thought of his great plan for a moment while everything that was life ran from his heart and died in the sand. They were studying him with the impassive solemnity of butchers, no doubt wondering at his presence here while his comrades lay dead below.

The captain considered a plea for one moment, an attempt at barter, then remembered how they tortured his breed. He threw himself forward, out of the crevice, down the steep bank, dragging at his pistols as he rolled, cursing himself for failure to check their priming. He struck the bottom and came to his feet as they made their rush over the edge and followed him down. He shot one and marvelled that the priming held true; the others swept down on him. He shot another and drew the long knife. Then the lance came, a flash of silver, penetrating his chest, pushing him off his feet like a baby, on to the earth that received him. He lay there, staring upwards, while the other lances were thrust deep into his body; and even now, going into the depths, he could think last of the mine and laugh within his heart.

VARGAS crept into the fort long after dark and made his way through the smouldering ruins to the roofless stable. The bale of green hides were gone, as expected, hauled away by the Indians, but the fire-blackened bricks of the false stall were yet in place. Vargas worked swiftly, tearing them away, opening the hole, to whisper softly, "Lupe . . . Lupe?"

The girl groaned and made a futile scratching sound on the dirt floor. Vargas thrust his great shoulders into the hole and gripped her arms and pulled her tenderly into the cold, fresh air. He placed her flat beside the stall and bathed her face, and made her sip the wine from his small bottle.

"Rest," Vargas murmured. "You see, little one, you are whole and happy, and maybe a bit hungry, but we will fix that."

While the girl rested, Vargas pushed into the hole and fumbled along the stable wall for the heavy bag of gold. The captain called him a clever man, stealing one pinch of dust each day, but the captain underestimated Vargas. The belt around his thick waist contained a decent sum, but here in the heavy bag was a fortune.

Vargas knelt beside the girl, touched her face and said, "Now we'll go, Lupe, like the wind."

"Were they . . .?" the girl asked.

"All," Vargas said. "Even the captain. He was clever, so very clever, but I watched the battle from a safer hole. The corporal is waiting to the south. We'd best be on the way."

"South?" the girl said.

"West," Vargas said. "Let him wait. We'll have no small piece of life where they treat us like dogs. We'll go west and make a new life. Let them have the gold, Lupe. We have enough. Up, little one. It's time to go."

THE END

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The photograph on page 26 is of Elizabeth Allan.

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Come To Sleepytown And
Felt Guilty
Saboteur Alfie
On The Blackboard
A Bit Too Much
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Across Clues XWORD 826

1. Olympic runners have got to be
4. You wouldn't expect one on board a ship to be as comfortable as one ashore
6. Tripe may be all right for
11. Can help photographer to make photo look attractive
12. Many farmers appreciate this perhaps particularly during the lambing season
13. Small this has usually little point
14. Although old, may reasonably be expected to keep good time

Down Clues

1. In the interests of world peace, nations must be prepared to
2. Judge and counsels are expected to be this in court
3. Should a neighbour have a spot of bother, gossips will gather to discuss this and
5. Kiddy may very well associate one with fright
7. It's much better if students of science know something about these
8. Gamblers frequently do this when they claim to have won
9. One expects a certain kind of this to need special protection
10. Wanted by motorist undertaking very long journey in mid-winter.

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XWORD 821 RESULT

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POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,874 (or Xword 826), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, March 14, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,874 result.)

NOTE. You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in the same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

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2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated March 21, and in JOHN BULL dated March 28), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

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